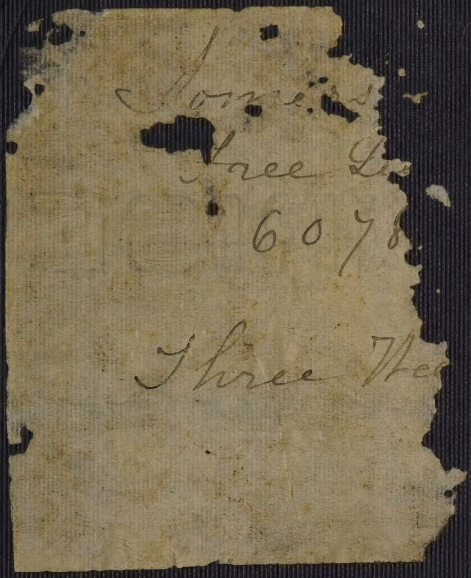
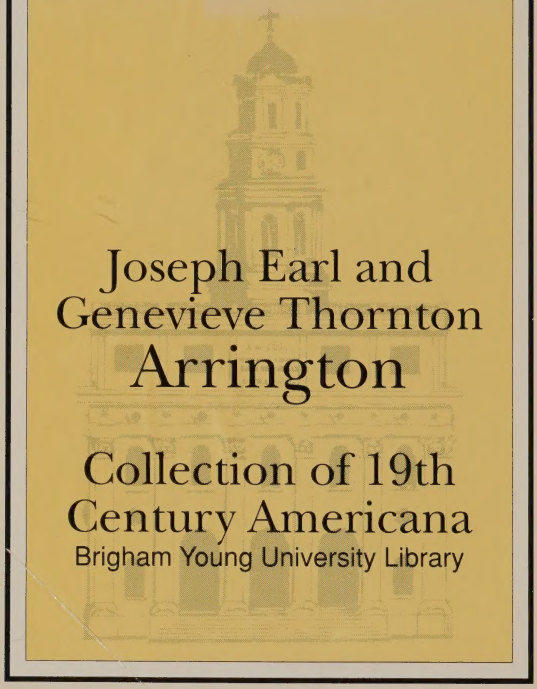
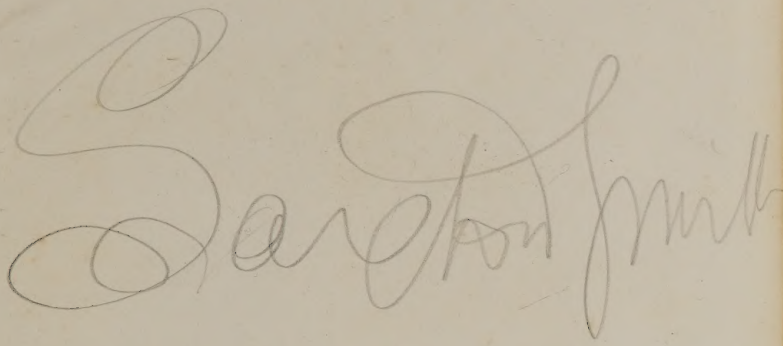

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THE OLD HOMESTEAD REVISITED

THE HEARTH-STONE



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The Hearth-Stone:

THOUGHTS UPON HOME-LIFE IN OUR CITIES.

BY

SAMUEL OSGOOD,

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY," "GOD WITH MEN, OR FOOT-PRINTS OF PROVIDENTIAL LEADERS," &C.

"This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

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FIFTH EDITION, ENLARGED AND ILLUSTRATED.

NEW-YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
346 & 348 BROADWAY.
LONDON: 16 LITTLE BRITAIN.
1854.

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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

This work has been received with such decided favor that the Publishers are induced to issue this enlarged and illustrated edition.

The two closing essays are wholly new. The illustrations are from original designs by Döpler. The artist best interprets his own meaning, and interprets very well the spirit of the whole volume. The frontispiece represents "The Old Homestead" in the country, revisited by the married children; and the title-page represents "The New Home" in the city, with the old people on a visit to the young people.

It is hoped that this edition will be peculiarly congenial with the coming season of family reunions, and will generally commend itself to the home feelings of our community.

PREFACE.

These thoughts are published for the same reason that led the author from time to time to put them upon paper,—a wish to meet a want in the sphere of the affections rather than to claim any honor in the kingdom of ideas. Wherever important questions have been at issue he has not avoided them, however conspicuous or controverted; but the volume aims to breathe a kindly spirit above the reach of sect and party. He is not ashamed to have his style show something of the habit of his profession, and to use, in part, ideas that he has expressed in the lyceum and the pulpit in a different form.

It will be seen that the several subjects connect themselves more or less closely with a year's life in the household, and that the light which cheers the whole twelvemonth is kindled on the hearth-stone at Christmas and New Year.

The state of things in our American cities is now so peculiar, so marked by privilege and peril, that no earnest plea for home affections and virtues can be wholly thrown away. To dedicate books to conspicuous names is a custom now almost obsolete, and if the Author were to venture upon any dedication of this little volume it would read somewhat thus :—

TO THOSE WHO HAVE EVER LOVED HOME,
AND WHO WISH TO LOVE IT ALWAYS.

New-York, *Oct.* 22, 1853.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Home Views of American Life	7
The Ideal of Womanhood	27
The Hope of Childhood	45
New Things	63
Solicitude of Parents	79
Reverence in Children	91
Brothers and Sisters	105
Marriage	119
Our Friends	135
Master and Servant	151
The Divine Guest	167
The Orphan	183
The Young Prodigal	199
Education of Daughters	213
Business and the Heart	233
Summer in the Country	249
Returning Home	265
The Church in the House	277
The Haunted House	291
The Angel of the Hearth	305

Some Views of American Life.

HOME VIEWS OF AMERICAN LIFE.

What day of all the year gives an American a happier sense of his civil and domestic blessings, than the old feast of the ingathering—the time-hallowed Thanksgiving? Once more it has come round; and our pen is disposed to catch a little of its genial temper before the hearth-stone.

This is peculiarly the home festival of our people, and throughout all the States of our republic it is affectionately cherished. As such, resting upon a good old precedent, it appeals to a permanent want, and gains interest with years. The character of the day has somewhat changed, and the domestic element in its uses preponderates far over the ecclesiastical. Yet much of the old feeling remains, and thousands gather in the churches, all the better prepared by the hour of worship, for the hours of fireside enjoyment. Large scope is usually given the preacher at this time, and many a timid man ventures upon bold themes, quite free to take the political, or social, or philanthropic, or ecclesiastical view of the country or the world, as he may choose. The preacher may not

complain, then, of the essayist for taking something of the same liberty, and trenching a little upon the prerogative of the pulpit. It is surely not amiss to open this series of discursive papers with some thoughts upon our home blessings, upon God's hand in giving them, and our work in spreading them.

Our home blessings! Take first the most obvious view of them. Consider the plenty that abounds. I speak not of the few affluent, but of the great majority who enjoy the common lot. What abundance in their homes! Look at the household of any unpretending citizen, and say what realm of earth, what domain of nature, does not send its treasures thither? The orchards, the fields, the pastures, the hills, the rivers, the mines, the oceans, bring their tribute to the fireside. From the shores of the Mediterranean come the olive, the grape, the orange, the fig, the date. The farther Indies send their fragrant herbs and sweet spices. The repast of a frugal family is rarely set forth without offerings from all quarters of the globe. The cottager's lamp, that burns by night, is fed with oil from the Arctic zone. The light of day shines through clear crystal, that shows the perfection of the arts, and the cheapness of their most beautiful products. In humble abodes the wonders of manufacture appear. Rich cotton stuffs tell of the affluence of the Southern soil and the skill of the Northern artisan. Luxuries, of old the prerogative of princes, are now familiar things. The silks of France and Italy are worn by the wife and daughters of the farmer and the mechanic. I will not try

to describe the mansions of the wealthy, although these, when graced by refinement, and exalted by piety and charity, may give impressive views of the ample bounty of Providence. It is better to contemplate the plenty within reach of the common lot. Among what people, in what age, has the common lot been so favored as with us? When in the earth's history have so many persons had reason to be grateful at the feast of the ingathering as now? We boast not of great banquets, in which the luxury of the few is wrung from the misery of the many. We speak not of pearls dissolved in the wine cup, and the price of cities thus quaffed at a draught. Our country, prouder than the empire of a Caligula, or a Cleopatra, can point to the households of her people, and in the amount of their combined blessings pity the poverty of the builders of the Coliseum or the Pyramids. Other lands may have prouder palaces and more princely fortunes. None can show so many favored homes. Go to thy home, and tell how great things the Lord, the giver of the harvests, hath done for thee in its plenty.

Consider too its peace as well as its plenty. No wars disturb it, nor rumors of war. No civil strifes threaten its tranquillity. No tyrannical powers intrude upon its freedom. Every household is better guarded than any feudal castle. Equal laws make it more impregnable than walls or moats. Public opinion is a host of defence stronger than an army with banners. We do not indeed forget our own imperfections and failings. We do not forget that millions are in bondage in our land, and that if they have homes

in favored cases, they have them by their owners' mercy, not by their own legal right. Yet to-day the slave is somewhat a sharer in his master's bounty, and this feast, that carries our thoughts back to the time of the great Hebrew Exodus, allows us to enjoy the liberty that God has bestowed upon us and these free States, and forbids us to despair of the redemption of any of the races yet held in bondage. It is something to boast of, that slavery is the exception now among civilized nations, instead of being, as of old, the universal law for the weaker from the stronger. For ourselves, we disclaim all share in its origin and continuance, deeming it to be a local misfortune to be deplored, not a national institution to be honored.

As a nation, we are lovers of equal law. The sober thought, nurtured by the best experience of the Atlantic States, finds its response in the new regions of the farthest West, and not even the mad thirst for gold has made the restless people on our Pacific coast forgetful of their birthright of liberty and law. A mighty habit of civil order has entered into our national life. The strongholds of order are in our homes. There each man finds the motive that leads him to resist alike the disorganizer and the invader. Thence we derive the assurance of the best of standing armies; for men that have households to defend, will be as little inclined to yield to hostile invasion as to destructive revolution. How peaceful our homes! As mighty is the power nurtured within them that makes them so.

Go home, and in addition to the blessings of plenty and of peace, consider the means of intellectual and spiritual

culture there. The laboring man may own a better library than a prince or prelate of the olden time. For a pittance trifling even to him, he may have tidings daily from all quarters of his own country, and from foreign lands. His children bring with them more learning from the common school, than would have sufficed of old to constitute the wisdom of a sage. For a less sum than the tippler gives for the draught that fevers his blood and crazes his brain, the artisan may adorn his house with choice works of art, through the cheap and beautiful products of the engraver's skill; and thus the beautiful from the hand of man and of God, may refine and cheer the common lot. Music, that voice of the beautiful arts, is becoming a familiar blessing, and a part of ordinary education. Groups of children by the fireside, and in the field and garden, sometimes at the corners of the streets or in their walk home from school, are heard singing their songs and hymns together, thus exchanging discord for peace, quarrels for harmony. Even the utilities that are becoming the custom of our time, have their refining and exalting influences. The light that streams up in our streets and houses, is the handmaid of a light brighter than its own. The pure water that gushes up in so many homes, has connections far more substantial than fanciful with the living water of the divine word. Facts enough show that human civilization needs, in the most literal sense, its water-baptism before its spirit-baptism can be realized.

The spirit is not lost sight of even in this utilitarian age. In religion the means of culture have their con-

summation. Within every home, in any degree worthy the name, Christianity proves its power, whether the gospel be nominally professed or not. The very unity of the family comes from Him, who has decreed the purity of the home by his fundamental law, and bound parents to each other and their offspring by a tie at once of principle and affection. Greater still the blessing where Christianity is fully known and practised in its truths and graces, where the pleasant fireside is a consecrated altar, and the earthly mansion opens ever into the heavenly.

Consider then the blessings of our homes—their plenty, their peace, their means of intellectual and spiritual culture.

Consider them well, and moreover, own God's hand in them.

God is Creator and Lord of nature. From him comes the plenty of our homes. Man does not create, he finds the bounties of his lot. His utmost industry and skill but find the blessings stored up for him. We may look upon the kingdom of nature from many points of view. We may consider the organism of the heavens, the great periods of the earth's apparent formation, the influence of climate and position upon the history of nations, and see God's hand in natural laws. But what view of the universe is more sublime, and at the same time more touching, than that from the home? The heavens themselves help in keeping it upon its foundation by the force of the great law of attraction, whilst every element and domain of the earth conspires to give it blessing. Tenderly indeed does the

Lord of this great Cosmos care for the dwellings of men. His love looks down from the stars of heaven that shine into the casement, and is reflected from the little flower that blooms in the garden, or cheers the sick man's chamber. To God, Creator and Preserver, be our thanksgiving.

God is in history, and to his hand we trace the peace of our homes. Our familiar social blessings are not the exhalations of a day, but the growth of ages. No clearer or more striking view of the development of the Divine plans in the course of events can be given than the domestic view. All that God has done for man as an individual soul or as a social being, thus is made to appear. There is a providence in the development of liberty, and so too in the progress of law, and in the combination of them both in a true social order. What better symbol of their combination and proof of providential guidance than the peaceful home? How vast the providential agencies instrumental in framing that statute-book which, next to the Bible, is the safeguard of the dwelling, and which bands the whole nation together in defence of every citizen's right,—the constitution of our country, to us the bequest of ages, guided by an arm mightier than man's, and to issues beyond his dream. In two grand lines of influence it brings to every household the co-ordinate powers which, from quarters once antagonistic, unite in a true civilization. It guarantees to every family the liberty so dearly prized by the old parent races of the Germanic North, whilst it gathers them into a great nation under the guidance of that law which was the bequest of the Roman empire to

the world. These and all the leading lines of history meet in the home, and in them we own God's guiding hand. From the East with the Star of true empire, came the benign power that united these two mighty agencies of our civilization. Surely it was the religion of Jesus that wedded Roman law to Germanic liberty, and laid the foundations of constitutional freedom and domestic peace. Blessed indeed was that bridal, and the living Word that hallowed the union still dispenses the blessing, and calls the children of its lineage to a future brightening unto the perfect day

The Constitution, and above it, the Bible! In this is the Word of God, and the way of life, present and eternal. It is the chief agency in intellectual and spiritual culture, giving the mind its true aim, the soul its rightful dignity, life its highest grace. Where the Bible is held in honor, the home has purity and elevation. Interesting indeed is the ecclesiastical view of Christianity. For its priests and temples we have no words of disparagement. Yet we most honor the church in honoring the home, for where the family is most blessed, there the church is most worthy. The history of the gospel neither ends nor begins with that of cathedrals and priesthoods. Since God laid the foundation of domestic purity on Sinai, since Jesus bore the grace of the gospel to the homes of Judah and Galilee, the brightest illustrations of the beauty and power of religion have been given in abodes far less stately than the temple, or the cloister, or the palace. The end is not yet, not yet developed are our grounds of gratitude to the Heavenly Father for the gospel in the blessings of our homes. God's love in giving them we own and adore.

Responsibility walks ever hand in hand with privilege, and human duty follows in the path of Divine goodness. No topic of graver import can be urged now, than that of the obligation of Christian people to diffuse domestic blessings. This topic carries us into the heart of the momentous social questions of our age. The Christian should have his answer ready, an answer too which considers all the needs of man's being, and respects alike his physical and moral wants.

The most obvious, certainly the most obtrusive evil in the homes of the wretched, is poverty. The love of God, who has given for man's use the earth and its fulness, the gospel of Him who fed the hungry and healed the sick, teach us to look with tender interest upon the poor, and try to redeem them from a lot as full of temptation as of suffering. Of public and private almsgiving, I will not speak now, important in their places as these are. There is a need far greater than these can alleviate, and I cannot dwell upon them here, pertinent as it would be to urge the worth of those benevolent schemes that aim to provide comfortable homes for the poor, and commodious baths and wash-houses in their neighborhoods. These charities appeal to enlightened self-interest, as well as humanity, and, if we will not ask in kindness who is my neighbor, we shall ask in fear, either of pestilent disease or aggressive violence. The springs of human energy are to be moved as never before, and the wretched are to be made to help themselves as never before; or our civilization, certainly European civilization, will stand on the

brink of an abyss fearful as at the dissolution of the old Roman Empire. Poverty has, in some cases, made an alliance that gives omens of a conspiracy worse than Catiline's, and, with cunning quickened by want, sharpens its knife upon the stone which has fallen to its lot instead of bread,—bent upon living by destruction, if it is not taught to live by producing. It is an indisputable fact that in many countries the majority are so ignorant and inefficient, that the whole annual product of the land is not sufficient to provide for their decent wants. The theorists of France, who have been losing their wits in the airy heights of pantheistic socialism, hoping to find a way to plenty, other than the old way of labor and frugality, may well remember the answer of the admirable political economist, Chevalier, and look for plenty rather in making property more desirable than less so, and giving the whole people the desire and the opportunity of profitable labor. The material product of France at the highest estimate, he declares, does not exceed ten thousand millions of francs, and thus at this estimate, an equal division would give each person 78 centimes, or about 14½ cents per day, for food, lodging, clothing, education, enjoyment. Thus, he adds, even upon the supposition of an absolute distribution of products, France is not in a condition to give the majority of her children a tolerable subsistence. Of course millions of citizens now come far short of this miserable pittance. What is the inference? Certainly the productive industry of the nation must be increased, that there may be plenty in the home. Let more wealth be pro-

duced, and each man be put in a position to get a due share of it, and the misery is alleviated, and plenty in the household stops the spirit of reckless revolution, and gives the spirit of peace, and motive and time for the higher aims of life.

What shall increase the national wealth and distribute it with due justice in the homes of the people? Communism? Not so; for destroying the very idea of property is not the way to increase the aggregate of property. Who will work, if his gains are not secured to him and his children? Who will plant the grain or the vine, if the field or the vineyard is to be an open pasture, which any idler may waste? The way to enlarge and distribute wealth is rather to strengthen the foundations of property, and give all motive to earn their share of it by labor, temperance, and economy.

Here we believe that every nation is bound to apply the force of law to reach the root of the difficulty. I am not proposing to discuss the various projects set on foot to insure the more equable distribution of property—such as the homestead laws of some of our own States, or the measures in train to redeem the peasants of Ireland from their slavish penury. Very certain it is, that we need to watch jealously the distribution of the public lands, to keep them from the grasp of avarice and intrigue, and to hold out the utmost inducements to actual settlers to till and own the soil. It is interesting to find that upon this one point, the most sanguine of the Land Reformers have much countenance from the most judicious conser-

vatives, and the wary sagacity of Webster himself saw no peril in securing a part of the national domain to every persevering cultivator. It is also interesting to observe that, whilst the ultraist advocates of a protective tariff have signally lowered their tone, some of the most earnest advocates of free trade, as the only philosophical theory, are favoring such judicious protective duties as shall tend to bring the producer and consumer near together, check the wastefulness of needless transportation, and thus prepare the way for the final triumph of free trade by the action of associative industry. All such expedients however good in themseves, are of no avail apart from a broad and energetic policy that meets the difficulty in the face. We mean the education of the entire people in schools open to all the children of the nation. Thus we reach the home—thus we open the eyes and quicken the energies of the people—thus we enlarge the products of intelligent labor, and guard against the worst evils of human inequality. Thus we open the way for a better social science and organization, and favor the associated enterprise, which is the best safeguard against communism. The educated, industrious population will take their own lot into their own hands, and by practising a truer philosophy of accommodation, they will apply in their home economy something of that wise policy which has been left too exclusively to the use of the favored few. The architecture of the house, and the arrangements of the neighborhood, will show the influence. Whilst gardens, filled with rare exotics, and stately mansions adorned with

the graces of art, may still be the prerogative of affluence; we shall see the comfortable and tasteful houses of the unpretending classes ranged about pleasant and salubrious squares, with all the appliances of health and order, usually deemed beyond their means. For my own part, I know no more cheering aspect of our country and our age, than that which is furnished by some of those villages, which have been built up in the vicinity of our great cities by associations of mechanics, securing to each man an independent home. The fact that a set of men, educated in our free schools, and with no means but the fruit of their own honest toil, provide such homes for themselves, must give a benevolent observer more genuine satisfaction, and more encouraging hope, than any of the proudest triumphs of capital, whether a palace in the city or a palace upon the water. It is not out of place here to say, that the highest honor will belong to him among our architects, who most skilfully plans a model house for the many of us who have moderate or slender means—a house that shall for the least outlay best secure the retirement, the refinement, and the health that make a true home. Honor to the science that has busied itself with this problem, and to the capital which has tried to carry the solution into practice thus far!

A true system of popular education in connection with our laws regarding inheritance, is raising up a generation which will not long be ignorant of the power of intelligence, industry, and friendly accommodation, in developing a social policy beyond the reach of the fanatical

theorists of the old world, who have impoverished the nations in their promise of plenty, and shed blood in rivers in the name of fraternity. The great mass of the people, it is to be hoped, will continue to have that home feeling, which is as mighty in conservation as in defence. We shall remain as we are in the best sense of the term—the most conservative nation on the face of the earth. That race of Ishmaelites, the homeless, the desperate, the Bedouins of civilization, whose hand is against every man's, whose delight is in commotion, whose life is in destruction, whose hope is in the despair of others, will disappear, kept down in their true place, or what is better, transformed into intelligent, industrious citizens, lovers of the state, the church, and the home.

Thus do we commend the worth of industry and the education upon which it rests, in diffusing the household blessings that we enjoy. But we build upon a sandy foundation without a positive religious basis. Upon that the household rests for its primary dependence, and they that sustain and practise Christian principles are benefactors alike of the dwelling and the church. Not merely among the wretched and ignorant does the gospel utter its rebukes, and urge its duties in reference to this point. It is in quarters far different that the great wrong has been done, and a great work is demanded. Errors of principle as errors of life, have power from the station that renders them conspicuous, or the refinement that clothes them with grace. Of errors of life in those who give to dissipation the prestige of eloquence, and throw the grace of

splendor around vices that strike at the foundations of domestic purity, I will not now undertake to treat. A passing word, however, upon certain modes of thinking and talking, which sow the seeds of those vices in quarters the most opposite. The pantheistic theories that confound all moral distinctions by confounding the distinction between God and nature, and make of passion a devotion, by calling all enthusiasm inspiration, have had their origin chiefly among secluded dreamers, bent, perhaps, upon amusing leisure by reckless speculation. Idly as the summer winds that float the thistle-down on their breath, have they vented their speculations, until amazed that their own fields and their neighbor's have been sown with tares by these gossamer voyagers. Wherever pantheism goes, there license follows in its train. More perilous than atheism, because more alluring, it deifies passion, and in the name of inspiration degrades man to the brute. It blasts life with its torrid fires, as atheism freezes by its polar cold. In the extremes of society—the affluent and the wretched—this tendency is found, alike in its speculative and practical form, in its denial of personal responsibility, its enthroning of indulgence in the place of discipline. Many a stately home is desolate, many an humble dwelling miserable, because the God of the gospel is denied, and that uncompromising law which secures the home its purity, peace and power, has been broken.

Chief among the blessings of the household, then, we name the gospel. It gives the crown to industry and education. Crowning industry and education thus alike

by our personal bearing, our public policy, we give as we have received, and acknowledge our duty, as we own God's love in our domestic blessings.

Bring near to ourselves now, in its personal and cheering aspect, the topic before us. To God, the Lord of nature, Ruler of events, Father of our spirits, be all the glory. Be his love the spring of our humanity. In the bounty of our hand, in the bounty of an example personal and domestic, which in itself is a benefaction, in an enlarged public, nay Christian spirit, let us freely give as we have received; that plenty, peace, piety, may cheer the dwellings of men and regenerate the world. This day be our thanksgiving at once a prayer of faith and a vow of humanity. It is the old home festival of our fathers that we are to keep. Whose heart does not yearn with sacred remembrances and affections to-day? The emigrant, the traveller, the sailor, all turn their thoughts homeward as the day approaches, and lament that their steps cannot follow their desires. Under sunny skies, amid the balmy gales and luscious fruits of the tropics, the wanderer yearns to cross the familiar threshold, and our bleak North in her wintry robe is dearer than Italy or the Indies. Many an exile has feelings that speak in such simple words as these:

"My father's bones, New England,
Sleep in thy hallowed ground,
My living kin, New England,
In thy precious paths are found;

And though my body dwelleth here,
And my weary feet here roam,
My spirit and my hopes are still
In thee, my own loved home."

Yet distance does not rob even the exile of all the blessings, and he knows that he is not forgotten. Families separated throughout the year, now gather together. Sons and daughters return to the parental fireside and are children again. The patriarchal times, surely among all of the Pilgrim race, and not among them alone, come back. The father stands as head and minister of the family. Many a happy band of children rise up and call the mother blessed. The absent are not forgotten—the departed are tenderly remembered—seats vacant at the table have occupants in the hearts of the survivors.

It is well—it is well—this home-festival of the ingathering. God gives the abounding harvest, and our fellow-men are to us the stewards of his bounty. Devoutly to Him, kindly to them, let the hours pass. Health to the absent, a tear for the departed—a smile for the present—good will to all on earth—glory to God in the highest.

Let the young rejoice, and the old be young again. Let memory solemnize us by her images of scenes and days gone by, whilst hope cheers us by auspicious promises of the future on earth, and of the heavenly mansions, the soul's eternal home.

Thanksgiving Day.

The Ideal of Womanhood.

THE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD.

It is the Eve of Christmas, and above the cheerful family circle that gathers about the hearth, the faces of the holy family look benignly down, and Mary's own smile seems to brighten the genial light. All surely must call that mother blessed, who celebrate the birth of the Holy Child. The Angel of the annunciation seems always to be speaking anew in the anthem of the Nativity as if the voice which told Mary of her high destiny celebrated also its fulfilment, and the "Hail Mary" were but the prelude of the "Glory to God in the Highest."

Our thought this evening turns upon the Mother of Christ, as illustrating the ideal of woman and the sources of her power. In the manger at Bethlehem, the mother and child were together—together during the years of preparation for the public ministry—together at the cross. We honor both in honoring either. Especially in calling Mary blessed, do we honor Christ, for we remember not merely what she was to him, but what he has been to her and her sex and her race.

Let us look at the subject from our own point of view, nor try to put on the mask of affected sentiment or to stand on the stilts of borrowed dogmas. There is much

beauty and power in the Catholic notions of the Blessed Virgin, but they are not our convictions. The sweetest hymns in the Breviary are in her praise, and her heavenly face has been the chief charm of Catholic art, else altogether too grim with spectral monks and ghostly confessors. This one fact it is most interesting to remark, that as Christianity was divested of its genial and humane graces, and our Saviour himself was removed from the personal sympathies of men by a faith too forgetful of his humanity in vindicating his divinity, the affections of Christians sought in the Blessed Mother the solace denied them by prevalent views of the Divine Son. As the monkish spirit grew darker, the face of Mary beamed more brightly. The age that embodied its terrors in the "Dies Iræ," breathed its tenderness in the "Stabat Mater," the exquisite hymn whose authorship, strange to say, has been with show of reason ascribed to the most thorough-going of the Popes, Innocent the Third, the man who dared to put England under an interdict. It is not for such reasons that we are moved to speak of Mary now. We are not oppressed by a religion that so crushes the natural affections and rebukes the domestic feelings, that we need to look for solace to one taken arbitrarily from her place among women and invoked as Queen of Heaven, above all saints and angels, next to God. Looking upon our homes, so pleasant and so genial with woman's graces and children's gladness, we prefer to say the "Hail Mary" as the gospel gives it, and not as the priest has understood it. We can say, "Blessed art thou *among* women"—*among* them, not *above*

them—among them to illustrate their mission from God, their work on earth—their part in heaven.

Think of Mary first as illustrating true womanhood in its mission from God. Fathers and sons, as well as mothers and daughters, think. In our notions of education, society, reform, we are all afloat unless we start with right ideas; and whence are they but from the Eternal Mind. We know God as he reveals himself, and creation in its highest aspects reveals the thought of God. The Divine Being is Self-Existent, Almighty, All-wise, Ever-blessed, dwelling in light and love unspeakable. But the moment that we pass from the contemplation of his attributes to the survey of his works, we see every where partial manifestations of his fulness. Only as we bring together the various elements and beings of nature, do we comprehend the universe as expressing the mind of God. Throughout the whole we observe a law of duality, a harmony of contrasts, the two parallel footprints in the majestic march of Him who is the infinite Wisdom and Love. We see this form of development from the lowest to the highest plane of nature—in the affinities of the gases—in the strange and mighty forces of electricity and magnetism—in the rays of light—in the kingdom of plants—in the animated kingdom. In the human race it has its fullest expression. There the Most High has left most clearly the image of himself, and recorded the might and the loveliness of his own attributes. To the one sex he has given, in largest measure, strength,—to the other, beauty; to the one,

aggressive force—to the other, winning affections—to the one, the palm in the empire of thought—to the other, the palm in the empire of feeling. We need not pursue the parallel, nor rebuke the folly of those who would make the line of separation too sharp, and deny heart to man or wisdom to woman, forgetting that in man thought should be pervaded with feeling, and in woman feeling should be guided by thought. It is enough to look to Mary as she stood in the hour of her joy, and listen to what she said, who has been called beyond any other of her sex, to be their benefactor and interpreter :—

> My soul doth magnify the Lord,
> And my spirit doth rejoice in God, my Saviour,
> For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden ;
> For behold! from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Various ages may have various degrees of culture, and in knowledge and accomplishment the daughters of Christendom may now far surpass those taught in the simpler homes of Israel. Yet where among those favored with education or gifted with genius, shall we find a better interpreter of womanhood in its mission from God, than that trusting Hebrew in her filial faith and unwavering devotion. Of her, the Aspasias proud of the society of sages and orators, might learn that there is a faith passing knowledge, and a purity more refining than any literary taste; from her the Cornelias might learn of a kingdom greater than that to which they vowed their sons; from her the Sapphos might hear of a vision beyond that of any impas-

sioned fancy; and the Cleopatras of a gem brighter than any in their crown. Her soul attuned to devotion by the Psalms of her great ancestor, David, and inflamed with hope by the visions of prophets, and schooled to patient charity by the choicest examples of the mothers in Israel, she stands at the centre of Providential history, receiving from the former ages their mantle of honor, and transmitting it to the new ages enriched with a divine grace, destined to brighten with time.

Of Mary's life and work, few particulars are given—but those few are expressive of her whole character. She who kept her faithful watch on the night of the nativity, never belied the promise of that time. With mingled solicitude and reverence, tenderness and fortitude, she guarded her child, marked the gradual rising of the consciousness of Divinity within him, and waited between hope and fear for the development of his mysterious life.

One of the most gifted women of our age, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, thus portrays Mary's feelings as she looked upon her child sleeping :

"Sleep, sleep, mine Holy One.
* * * *
I am not proud—meek angels, put ye on
New meeknesses to hear such utterance rest
On mortal lips, 'I am not proud'—*not proud!*
Albeit in my flesh God sent His Son,
Albeit over Him my head is bowed,
As others bow before Him, still mine heart,

Bows lower than their knees! O centuries
That roll, in vision, your futurities
My grave athwart!
Whose murmurs seem to reach me while I keep
Watch o'er this sleep!
Say of me as the Heavenly said, 'Thou art
The blessedest of women!' blessedest,
Not holiest, not noblest—no high name,
Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame,
When I sit meek in heaven!—
For me—for me—
I often wandered forth, more child than maiden,
Among the lonely hills of Galilee,
Whose summits looked heaven-laden!
Listening to silentness, that seemed to be
God's voice, so soft, yet strong—so fain to press
Upon my heart, as Heaven did on the height,—
And waken up its shadows by a light,
And show its vileness by a holiness!
Then I knelt down, as silent as the night,
Too self-renounced for fears;
Raising my small face to the boundless blue,
Whose stars did mix and tremble in my tears!
God heard *them* falling often—with his dew."

Think of the lot of Christ, and remember how closely another heart beat in unison with his heart—how nearly parallel her life ran with his life. Pass from the manger to the Cross, and those two scenes are enough to suggest the outlines of her experience during that eventful interval. Listen to the words—"Woman, behold thy son"—and to the disciple, "behold thy mother." Think of what

followed—the joy at Christ's rising to dwell in visible presence with his own, and after his ascension to dwell with them in his witnessing Spirit. Among those who remembered the promise : " Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," there was one who added a mother's love to a disciple's faith, as in the coming of the Comforter to her soul, she received her new birth into the kingdom of God, through him who had his birth on earth from her. Confided as she had been to the disciple whom Jesus so loved, a guest in his household, the constant companion of the growing circle of believers, how could she be without great influence on their faith and fellowship? When she passed away, a new light rose for them in the heavens. Their religion was not a code of moral precepts, or a set of theological propositions, but a gospel of speaking facts and living words. Their religion was Christ and all that is Christlike. Their heaven was no ethereal abstraction, no pantheistic merging of spirits in infinity; but the home of true souls—the mansions of the Father opened by Christ to all the faithful, and surely unto her who guarded his infant weakness and wept over his dying agonies. On earth and in heaven the blessed mother stood to them for the ideal of true womanhood, and early Christian antiquity is full of traces of the tender and beautiful affection felt for her, before superstition seized upon the lovely sentiment and hardened it into a priestly dogma. Yet under the dogma, the true feeling has never been wholly lost sight of, and with many who are called idolatrous, the homage to St. Mary is but an exalted

form of reverence to a moral loveliness, now in heaven. Our own Germanic ancestors shared more deeply in the sentiment probably than any other people, as they came from their cold homes in northern Europe—received the gospel of Christ from the missionaries of the church, and rejoiced to find their national feeling of chivalrous respect for woman confirmed and spiritualized by the honors paid to her, whom angels hailed as full of grace, and whose name all Christendom spoke with blessing. This high sentiment, somewhat sobered by our Protestant faith and our household utilities, has come to us with our religion and our homes.

It is becoming a somewhat practical, and in both hemispheres, an agitating question, how far the accepted Christian idea of true womanhood should be enlarged or amended to meet the demands of our own age. The voice of Mary Wolstoncroft, claiming masculine freedom for her sex, has found a thousand echoes, and assemblies of women, no strangers to Christian culture, clamor for a new day of social and political emancipation. Their demands are not to be treated with ridicule, for under all their extravagance lurk truths of momentous import. Who can think of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of the sex, whose utmost labors hardly keep off cold and starvation—of the wretched notions of education and life, which so enfeeble the poor and corrupt the affluent—of the false social system which is so ready to smile upon the destroyer of innocence, and curse the victim of his arts;

who can think of the scenes in the hovels of innocent poverty, the dens of loathsome vice, and the gilded saloons of painted misery, upon which the shadows of this blessed eve are now falling, and not be willing to pardon some thing to the spirit of mercy, even if its tones seem to us too shrill for gentle lips? Who is not willing to remember, moreover, that if they assert a folly, who claim for woman the political offices that must rob the home of her fidelity; they assert, and actually are diffusing a more dangerous error, who in more silken speech brand the household virtues as servile drudgery, and whose lives are a continued and studious round of elegant and jewelled vagrancy from the sacred uses and blessed companionships of their own fireside; nay, whose eyes seem only to open when the lights of the theatre and ball-room blaze, and whose pulses really beat only in exciting assemblies under the delirium of the wine-cup and the voluptuous dance. From both errors the true idea of womanhood may save our time, and, nevertheless, confer upon us the substantial good, which is so dimly seen by the rival schools of culture—the fashionable and the masculine. Well taught and trained, our daughters may have all true graces without Parisian levity, and all intellectual discipline without Amazonian boldness.

No greater mistake can be made than that which would take woman from her sphere of dignity and power, and make her the rival of man in pursuits which require his ruder nature and sterner will. Mary, the wife of Godwin, with her obtrusive band of far more extravagant

followers, opens no path of honor and power compared with that pointed out by Mary of Nazareth, the light of her home, the guardian of her Holy Child; encouraging the disciples by a voice, the mightier on account of its not being heard in the streets, and to them and to all after them, a name for spiritual loveliness, and all gentle and confiding graces, among the souls exalted to heaven. Using present agencies, and following the guidance of the gospel, the mothers and sisters in our Israel, may deal more wisely and strongly with the social problems of our time, and do their part for the kingdom of God—than by crowding to the ballot-box, screaming in the caucus, or snatching at the staff of office. So deeply is this the conviction of the most judicious of the sex, that many words on the subject would be superfluous. Nor would we add any to the many words that have been shed upon the question of the equality of the sexes. As well let the rays of the solar light dispute for precedence, and the red ray, so blazing, presume to deny the equal worth of the violet ray, which, science teaches us, has power to make iron magnetic, and which more than its more bold companion on the other side of the prism, makes the impression on the silvered plate—itself the most magical pencil in the skilful hand of that unrivalled painter, the sun. God has united both rays in the sweet light of true humanity, and what He has joined together, let not man try to put asunder.

The greater danger is in a servile acquiescence in prevalent worldliness and mediocrity—a disposition to repeat

the common pleas of precedent, and to live solely in the externals of society. In our own beloved country, where liberty, without example, is extended to woman, and a courtesy, without limit, is shown her, they who hold in their keeping the future of their sex should not be content to follow the rule of court journals, or bow to the dicta of Parisian modists, who are fond of ruling over morals, as over costume. Our liberty should give them a stronger and more rational intellectual discipline than in the lands more enslaved by precedent. Our courtesy, that national chivalry, which insists on deference as much towards the rustic maiden as the city belle, will be sadly abused if made the occasion of an obtrusive arrogance, which claims precedence as a right, and elbows its way through crowds of men who are more ready to yield by grace than by command.

Our country has from the first cherished a noble idea of womanhood, and under its influence the strength of its sons, and the refinement of its daughters have been nurtured. Kindly omens abounded in the first days of its history. Our continent itself is one of the omens. That you may not call me too fanciful or sentimental, let me quote from an eloquent writer on the philosophy of geography, as he compares the Old and New Worlds. "The number of the continents in the Old World," which is double that of the New World, their grouping in a more compact and solid mass—make it already and pre-eminently the continental world. It is a mighty oak, with a stout and sturdy trunk, whilst America is the slender and

flexible palm-tree, so dear to this continent. The Old World, if it is allowable to employ here comparisons of this nature, calls to mind the square, solid figure of man; America the lithe shape and delicate form of woman."

So America stood like a fair bride in her ocean home, adorned for her husband, that mighty race from the East, that came in the path of the sunshine, as if following the lord of day, who is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. Our heroes bore with them a Christian ideal of womanhood, and by it were gentle as they were strong. It came with Columbus in the cherished image of that noble queen, who gave gold and hope to an enterprise elsewhere rejected with derision; and the thought of Isabella mingled with that of the Blessed Mother, as he planted the cross on the western shores. It came with the cavaliers who gave Virginia its name and honor, and whose foremost and noblest chief found a counterpart of his own ideal in the Indian girl, who saved his life by risking her own, giving Christian mercy, to receive in return the Christian's faith and home; owning, by the baptismal vow, the Great Spirit whom she had seen in cloud and heard in the wind, thenceforth, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It came with the Huguenots of Carolina, the Catholics of Maryland, the Friends of Pennsylvania, the Hollanders of Manhattan, and not last nor least, with the Pilgrims of that May-flower, whose seeds struck deep into the New England soil, and whose scions have borne beauty and fragrance to the hills and valleys, the farms and cities of our mother-

land, making the wilderness blossom as the rose, when the sweet Marys gave grace to Puritan homes.

Herein lies a great element of power and of hope for our country. Our soil is rich, our lakes and rivers are vast, our strength is great, our courage good, our schools are many, our wealth is unexampled. But these are not all—nor are these the elements that are to tame our barbaric borders, and lead to harmony our chaotic and scattered members. The church and home must go together, and unite our nation under the empire of Christ, as under the empire of civil law. The church and home are advancing together from the Atlantic to the Pacific shore. The farmer of Oregon, the miner of California, are not to be beyond the pale of Christian civilization. Even they shall hear the chimes that tell of the nativity of the Saviour—they shall find in their homes, rude cabins though they may be, pleasant faces, whose womanly grace and childish confidence shall reveal a light kindled of old by the Blessed Mother, and nurtured for ever by her Holy Child.

Here patriotism and Christianity blend in one. Anathema upon the false speculations and foul vices that assault the family institution. Blessed be the gospel of Him who asserts the uncompromising law of domestic purity, and opens most tenderly the Divine benignity, when most urging the Divine commandment.

There is a branch of this subject which I cannot treat —one, perhaps, that dwells too much in the region of

higher sentiment to be the theme of popular discussion, and which no writer can easily handle, without seeming to be borrowing from the ancient theology its comments on the Song of Songs, or delving in the dark but rich mines of Swedenborg's Arcana. Yet it would be no far-fetched topic, whilst speaking of her who has been called the Queen of Heaven, and regarded by the Fenelons and Catharines of faith, as the type of celestial loveliness, to treat of the ideal of womanhood in the spiritual world. Surely the higher a true culture rises, the more clearly each great family of souls becomes more true to its own genius, and the higher companionship known on earth, in the most refined society, and the worthiest families, illustrates the permanence of those traits that give man and woman their intellectual and moral characteristics. The earthly loves, which Christ came to consecrate, bear the germs of immortal uses, and are like Mary's own emblem the rose, which, though born in the earth, lifts its bloom and wafts its fragrance to the heavens. I know no more elevated illustration of this view than that given by the Milton of Italy, the solemn Dante, who, in his vision of Heaven, wanders through the celestial courts with the spirit that had been the charm of his earthly life, and who, often as he stood confounded before some new mystery, found his perplexities solved by the readier intuition of his sainted companion. The higher companionship in literature, art, society, religion, which we enjoy in this world, and which is so incomplete when men or women are alone, gives some idea of the state of souls on high, where

they that shine most, and they that love most, cherubim and seraphim, blend their holy ministries and bow together before the Eternal Presence.

A homelier view of the subject must end our meditation—a view, however, that opens into the heavenly world. The homelier the better—the nearer to our hearts. Let us call Mary blessed to-day for ourselves, and for our own families and friends. Bless her, now that we are thinking of all good mothers, whether the queen true to her children on her island-throne, or the faithful mother in the farmer's cottage;—so many on the earth—so many who have gone from the world, and whose remembered faces now bring heaven near. Bless her now, that we are thinking of the happy children gathered together in the name of her Holy Child—as we think of the hosts of little children whom He has called and is calling to Himself. It is a time to be sober, and a time to be merry. In our soberness and our mirth, alike let us remember God's love for us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

God's blessing, readers, upon you all—mothers, fathers, children, brothers, sisters, friends—meeting or to meet in the sanctuary, or in your homes! His love bring all together at last around the tree of life, whose fruit is peace eternal!

Christmas Eve.

The Hope of Childhood.

THE HOPE OF CHILDHOOD.

The account of the Flight to Egypt, so illustrated by the old masters, brings three images before us, all in themselves interesting, and expressive of lasting realities. Central, is the figure of a young child, speaking at once of childhood and the God who blesses it. On either side what contrast in the associated forms! On one hand stands Mary, watching with unwearied vigils over her precious charge. In the distance, in his stately palace, the dark form of the tyrant king rises before us; his hands stained with the blood of a noble wife and three sons, his conscience torn by remorse, his wrath the more inflamed from the consciousness of deserving vengeance, his despotic will brooking no thought of rivalry, and dooming to death the infant innocents of a whole town to make sure of destroying the predicted Messiah.

Here is an emblem of what is ever in the world. Here is childhood, its guardian angel, and its evil genius. May not the scene suggest some thoughts upon Christianity as the guardian of childhood against the spirit of the world, which is its foe?

The mother and child fled to Egypt, there to lan-

guish or be forgotten? Herod sat in his palace hall, there to rule and prosper? No. Ere the year closed, he died; before death came, already a mass of putrefaction. He died, signing with his fainting hands his will and the death-warrant of his oldest son; thus dispensing death and empire in his last act. He died, and the magnificence of his funeral mocked the wretchedness of his decease. The body was borne aloft on a bier, which was adorned with gems; the winding-sheet was of purple; his whole army, native and foreign, marched in war array to his grave. As the gorgeous procession by slow stages passed to the stately mausoleum, twenty-five miles distant at the Herodium, word went to the fugitives in Egypt, that the tyrant was dead. Who at that time, in the excitement of the funeral, or the festivities of the succession—who cared for the obscure family, that stole on its way quietly to Nazareth? The mother and child lived! They founded a kingdom that dies never.

Richly that Christ-child repaid his mother's watching, alike to her and to her sex. The religion of Christ has been the strength and comfort of parents, and the hope of their children. Its power in the nurture of the young mind has been illustrated in every age, and connects itself now momentously with the most important topics of our time. What topic more congenial with this Christmas season, so consecrated to associations with childhood and youth, leading us back to the cradle of the infant Redeemer, and opening a festival in which young hearts all over the world rejoice? The child ever needs

protection; Herod ever in some form rages; Christianity like a mighty maternal heart needs ever to keep its watch.

Look upon the past history of Christendom from this point of view, and how novel and interesting is the result! We have been taught to associate the progress of Christianity with the account of theological controversies, bitter disputes, bloody persecutions, proud hierarchies; and thus we too often read the annals of the Church with shame or contempt. But take a fairer and more intimate view: think of Christianity in connection with childhood and youth, trace its influence upon the home, the school, the Church, in this aspect. Do this, and we shall find ourselves moved by the annals of every age to tenderness and gratitude; for in every age Christianity has been the guardian of childhood against the spirit of the world, its foe. When the Saviour took young children in his arms and blessed them, he performed an act which has not been without significance in all subsequent time.

In the primitive time the Christian confessors showed how fondly they had been taught to regard their offspring, to care for their souls in life and in death, to commend them with deathless love to Him who had opened the gates of everlasting life. In the Roman catacombs, far beneath the city, the places of early Christian worship and burial, the inscriptions on the tombstones well express the parental feelings of that time. An uncommonly large portion of the epitaphs given in the descrip-

tion belong to children, and they express the tenderest affection. "Virginius remained but a short time with us." "Sweet Faustina, may you live in God." "Laurence to his sweetest son, Severus, borne away by angels on the seventh Ides of January." How different the spirit breathed in such inscriptions from that inspired by the idolatry, that formed a god of the war-spirit that makes childhood desolate and orphaned, or bows down before Moloch and casts children into the fire at his feet!

Turn even to those ages that are called by eminence dark—the time of monkish austerity and priestly sway. There is much in their annals to move indignation and sometimes horror. But interpret them fairly, and we find much to move our admiration and love. Consider that embodiment of the middle ages, the Gothic cathedral, wonderful alike for the vastness of its proportions and the delicacy of its details. There may be austerity in the priests that attend its altars, fanaticism in the monks who chant its litanies, cruelty in the mailed men who kneel at its chancel. But how tender is the expression of the whole in reference to childhood! The Holy Mother and her Divine child beam upon the worshipper from illuminated missals and painted windows. Conspicuous at the vestibule or by the altar, stands the baptismal font. Thither the child of the poorest peasant is brought, and by the baptismal water the child is recognized as belonging to the kingdom not of this world, a lamb of the good Shepherd. Not for the few rich, noble or mighty, but even for him, the least of the earth, this temple was erected, and by that

rite the church, imperial in its stately palace, promises to watch over the child, care for his soul in sorrow, sickness and death. What would childhood have been in the dark ages without the Church? What other power could have stood between innocence and its tempter and destroyer? Who would have withstood Herod, if the mother heart of Christianity had withheld its guardianship?

The Protestant Reformation consider, and through all its conflicts and persecutions, what tenderness is shown on both sides towards childhood! To secure the young heart to Christ and the Church, the rival parties labored with indefatigable zeal. In the zeal and policy of Loyola we may see how tenderly the old Church sought to keep or regain her hold upon the young by measures suited to the time. Would we know Luther's mind, look upon him as he sits with lute in hand at his fireside, enjoying the gladness of his children at the Christmas tree;—look at him, as with pen in hand and the veins of his forehead dilated with the excitement, he writes the immortal appeal to the powers of Germany in behalf of free schools, which has joined his name with Milton's as champion of popular education. Think too of the Pilgrim Fathers, so tender and thoughtful in their stern self-denial, in their wilderness home erecting church and school-house side by side, both sacred to God and his people.

But it is time to look round upon the world as it now is. The most important question is: What is to be done for the young? This question comprises every other, for

the generation that is growing up will soon have the destinies of the race in its charge. Surely Christianity needs to be watchful, for Herod is still abroad. His spirit is still the spirit of the world—of the world's passions and its policy—breathing now in the oppression that neglects or overburdens the young, and now in the capricious indulgence that betrays with a kiss and kills in the name of love.

The world's passions conspire against childhood and youth. The lust and intemperance, which degrade the parent, press heavily upon the child, and because of them, thousands of young hearts find themselves in a world that for them has few smiles. All the temptations that inflame the senses, prompt to vice, and kindle hatred, conspire against the young, alike by corrupting those who should be their protectors, and sowing prematurely the seeds of wickedness in youth itself. Every haunt of dissipation, every resort of revelry, whether the drunkard's den or the fashionist's brilliant saloon of corruption, is a conspiracy against youth, and coins its gold from the life-blood of young hearts. The massacre of the Innocents still goes on. The spirit of Herod yet lives, and acts in a manner more insidious than an open death-warrant. It lives in the passions of a world ready to sacrifice all to its lusts.

And the world's policy is not kind to childhood. What murderers are those its chief idols, Mars and Mammon! How cruel the game of war and the lust of gold! Who rules over the strife that robs children of parents who go to die in foreign lands? What genius, Herod or Christ, presides

over the scene, when death-dealing batteries are planted before peopled cities, and the blood and brains of women and children are dashed out at every volley? Ye Christian chivalry, ye battle-loving parents, answer that question as for yourselves and your children!

The lust of gold, that moves the world's habitual policy, is less savage but not much more merciful. The spirit of trade demands gain, and claims childhood too much as an instrument of gain. In the Old World, what myriads whom school or church never blesses or knows, are, almost from infancy, trained to the mine or loom, shut out from free air and play, cramped in body, as in mind. The conscience of Christians is waking up to the subject, I know, still what a world of wretchedness remains unalleviated! No poem in the language contains more terrific truth, than that noted ode, called "The Cry of the Children," blending, as it does, the tragic depth of Æschylus with the tender pathos of Cowper.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses
Down the cheek of infancy—
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek!"
Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,—
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old!

Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;
And at midnight's hour of harm,—
"Our Father," looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except "Our Father,"
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within his right hand which is strong
"Our Father!" If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
"Come and rest with me, my child!"

And well may the children weep before you;
They are weary, ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun:
They know the grief of men, but not the wisdom;
Are bitter with despairing, but not calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
No dear remembrance keep;
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:
Let them weep! let them weep!
They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For you think you see their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity.

An ode such as this was not without effect upon the heart of England; nor is the humanity which it imbodies rare in our land. The spirit of trade among us is not wilfully

cruel, but it is too devoted to gain—negligent of the claims of youth, when not unkind. Neglected ones in our own streets have too frequent cause to reproach us—neglected ones who are strangers to the blessings of our civilization, and who learn our laws first from their penalties, and become acquainted with the lessons of the prison, not of church or school. They, alas, who might be an honor to their sex, are made to recruit the ranks of shame, and what is the spirit of Herod compared with the world's heart to fallen woman, alike in the wickedness that tempts and the scorn that awaits the fall.

And not solely among the neglected of the earth does the spirit of the world lie in wait for childhood and youth. We might speak of the indulgence that pampers and vainly ruins the soul—of the kindness that kills those whom it aims to bless—of the neglect of health, natural and spiritual laws, which luxury introduces into modes of home education—of the want of a firm discipline that is kindest when firmest—of a practical infidelity that robs childhood of its sacred birthright, by robbing it of trust in God and the eternal life. Herod rages truly in the passions and the policy of the world.

But not unchecked! Christianity with its great maternal heart is true to her watch, and calling helpers to her side. Let us acknowledge it. The great work of Christians now, is with the young. The work is twofold, one of growth and of conquest, one that would rear up the offspring of faith within the divine kingdom, and

one which would visit the neglected and reclaim them from the enemies' power.

The work must begin, indeed, in the hearts of the mature, fostered there by communion with God and Christ, fostered by sacred thought and earnest resolution. Beginning there, it is to be carried out into the great spheres of life, in which childhood receives its direction. Vain for us to attempt to imbue the young mind with truths, which we receive only in name—vain the attempt to feed yearning souls with empty words, or breathe into them a higher life, with appeals so faithless and loveless as to bear falsity in their very tone, and fall dead upon the ear. As the bee watched by Solomon alighted upon the living rose, and shunned the pretended one, so childhood knows well the tone of sincerity, and craves reality for its mental food. Let it find the reality.

Let it find it in the home. Home, blessed word always, thrice blessed, this day, that speaks to us of Jesus, who has secured to the household so much of its purity and affection, and that brings to mind the loved ones beneath our own roofs, who have hardly slept the night from anxious waiting for the morning dawn. Home —what an engine of power, alike to harm and to bless! Let it be Christian in form and in spirit. There let God be acknowledged in praise and prayer. There let the eternal world be unveiled, and every blessing bring it near in gratitude, and every trial draw down its consolation. There let the young breathe in the spirit of the gospel. There let Mary keep her watch of love, and Herod waits in vain to destroy.

Let the world's bad spirit be withstood, too, in the schools. The cry is now rising in every part of Christendom—from the backwoodsmen of the Rocky Mountains to the cities of the Old World, of late, stirred by a mighty want—Education, Universal Education! In no section, certainly, of our land, is this spirit comparatively more earnest than with us—for, beyond question, this State has been recently passing through an intellectual revival altogether unexampled in the annals of our Free Schools. Christians should rejoice in the movement, and should rescue popular education from the blighting touch of avarice and superstition. Let it go on in its work of growth and conquest—nurturing the children of the privileged, reclaiming the offspring of the neglected, carrying out a mode of education based upon the laws of God and the soul of man, mindful of every faculty, grace, affection, that God has hallowed and human wisdom unfolds. Let nothing that has been done lead us to be unmindful of what is to be done, alike in the extension and elevation of the schools. We wonder at the system of training pursued of old, which led youth to regard the school as a prison. Higher yet the idea must rise, as better views are entertained of the capacities of the child, and the intellectual helps and moral associations that bring them out. We need the idea of the Christ-child in the school. Let that haunt the minds of parents and teachers, and that sacred ideal of childhood will not be without loving disciples, whose voices shall make the songs of the school-room as sacred and acceptable as temple

chants or choral litanies. A better spirit, and one that demands the co-operation of all Christian people, has shown itself in our city of late, in the new efforts to seek out neglected children, and open to them the blessings of education, and industry and religion. The establishment of the Mission at the Five Points, of the Children's Aid Society, of the Asylum for Friendless Boys, have made an era in the Christian annals of New-York, which all right-minded persons should bless, alike in their word and their work. Add to these efforts for the poor and neglected, the new institutions, such as the Free College and the Cooper Institute, which offer such unwonted privileges to worthy boys of the humblest means, and we have no reason to despair of the future of this great city, or to distrust the school as a noble ally of the church.

The Christian church! Here the spirit of the guardian mother ought eminently to prevail. The church should be the mother of the young. Oh, how cold and dreary is the idea, deemed by many the essential of Protestant truth, the idea that the young, or at least, little children, can have no vital connection with the Church; but must wait for some preternatural visitation in maturer years to call them to the arms of the great spiritual mother, and make them feel themselves hers. How unsatisfactory the doctrine, that children are to grow up, as if outside of the church, with the prospect of one day being taken in. Be ours the cheering view, sanctioned, surely, by the analogies of revelation, the faith of centuries, and by the love of parents, that the child should be regarded as by

birth and baptism admitted into the Christian kingdom, and to be nurtured from the very first in the principles and affections congenial with the government of God. Let this idea be accepted, and power and blessing would come in its train. Higher consecration would crown the home, better wisdom would guide the strength of father, and holier love fill the soul of mother, from their communion with the kingdom that claims parent and child for its own. The Christ-child should be remembered in the Christian Church. When remembered truly, he will save childhood from Herod's hands.

This season is a time of anticipation and hope. It needs no very vivid imagination to bring before us the myriads of homes over Christendom, that ring with young mirth, and look cheerfully upon the opening age. Yet the grave question cannot but press itself upon us, What is in store for the generation, that is soon to stand in our places, and bear the burdens of life in our stead? Interesting, engrossing indeed are the fields of science, art, enterprise, enjoyment, now dawning upon us and promising a bright meridian to the new generation. Yet fearfully many dark spots in the horizon rise in the distance, and portend ill to many whose experience of the world is yet to come. The great want is of an earnest purpose, looking to an eternal aim, and enforced by a true plan of social life. The young host is ready, but needs better guidance. Muratori, the Italian historian, tells us, that in the twelfth century, in the contagion of the crusades, children caught the spirit, and an army of 30,000 was gathered from village and city,

and marshalled by a child, started for the Holy Land and the Tomb of Christ. They marched on till they came to Marseilles, and the great sea stopped their fond dream. They wandered about distracted, and thousands miserably perished. Perhaps too romantic story for sober truth! But what a parallel to it in our age! A mighty host of youths starts on its way to a land of imagined holiness and peace. Vague aspirations, selfish passions, spiritual yearnings for the good and true, move their hearts. A child will lead them; the child who is to be the strong man of the age, and who is not yet known. Sadly, sadly, will they be disappointed, unless the leader is himself divinely led, and the heart of the Christ-child lives in him, and thus in the hearts of this generation, the Messiah is born anew.

Every true purpose, all genuine faith speeds the day of his new coming, and hastens the downfall of Herod and his host.

Friends, Readers, let your hearts apply the lesson of this day, and let your hearts be cheered and solemnized by its associations. Think of your homes and the loved ones there. Think too of the loved ones departed, and deem them not lost, but gone before! Love your children, and love them the more by looking on them in the gospel light, by loving them as in God and Christ!

Think too of our own early days. How vividly they at times come back, so that we almost forget maturity and its cares, and are children once more. Let them come back now, and with them all their tender associations—

with them thoughts of early home; brothers, sisters, father, and more than all of her, who stood to us in Mary's place, and blessed us with a Christian Mother's love!

But can the association rest there? No! Upward to Him, so holy in childhood, so glorious in maturity—to Him, Friend and Saviour, Messiah, from whom our best blessings flow, let our gratitude rise, and to God, through Him, let our devotion be exalted! We have no hymn to the Virgin Mother, no Ora pro Nobis for the beatified Madonna. Simple faith is better than romantic tradition. To us heaven is fairer for possessing that Mother and that Child.

Christmas Day.

New Things.

NEW THINGS.

Measured by any human standard, how daring was the vision of the Christian seer! From Patmos, his watch-tower of rock in the Ægean Sea, midway between the hemispheres of ancient civilization, he surveyed the ruling powers of the world, declared their doom, and the rise of a new kingdom, even the City of God. The predominant forces of the existing age took visible shape before his inspired imagination. Jewish bigotry, Pagan idolatry, Roman despotism, led on by the master spirit of evil, stood before him, as so many fearful monsters. Equally vivid were the forms of divine agency by which they were to be subdued. From Him who sat upon the throne revealed in heaven, came the decree, "Behold, I make all things new." Our pen need not lose its cheerfulness in writing of this opening year, with such imagery in view.

How much of that vision has been proved true? Enough surely to save it from the charge of presumption, enough to ascribe its daring rather to a devotion mindful of divine guidance than to a wilfulness impatient of delay. The former things have passed away. The old temple is remembered only for the sake of its spiritual archetype. The despot's purple has faded before the bloodstained

robes of the martyrs. The idols to which men bowed on both the Ægean shores, the European and the Asiatic, have fallen. Even the crescent, that has for a time displaced the cross, and which now in the city of Constantinople gleams from the dome of St. Sophia, forms no exception to the statement, for it marks no idolatrous shrine, but like the orb which it represents is but a partial reflection of the great source of light, before which it must one day grow pale.

Gradually, but none the less mightily, the new power went on its way, and ere long from beyond the Mediterranean on the Carthaginian shore, there came a great response to the exile of the Ægean. When Augustine wrote his "City of God," the philosopher of history confirmed the vision of the seer, as he celebrated the triumphs of that word which planted the cross above the throne of the Cæsars. Tempting indeed is the historical survey thus presented, but we must not yield to the enticement. We must quit this grand prospect of the nations, and speak of the Gospel, as sent chief of all for the renewal of the soul and the redemption of the home. World-regenerating power as it is, its first prerogative is its life-renewing office.

This principle we are prepared to lay down at the outset, that in the order of Providence Jesus Christ is the spiritual head of the human race, and that men and nations find redemption and true life from God through Him. What was said of old, needs to be said now. "Behold I make all things new"—now in the ears alike of those who

have never heard Christian truth, and of those who have lulled themselves to slumber beneath its familiar sound. Nay, the most sincere Christians need constant renewing in the light of first principles and by the spirit of true life. Their piety is apt to harden into formalism—their charity to narrow into some kind of clanship—their industry to sink into a low worldly prudence apart from all divine aims.

It is not easy for any of us to begin the New-Year without a pleasant sense of freshness or renovation, as if some former burdens had passed away and many things had become new. This is well, and needs only to be made better. As we renew our friendships, we should not fail to renew our relation with the Great Friend, and invoke his blessing upon the opening months.

We need first of all to review our principles. These we regard as constituting the essentials of our faith. However right they may have been, we are very apt to lose sight of them, or gradually, perhaps almost unconsciously, allow others to creep into their place. The word of Christ to us now is as of old, "Believe." What do we believe? What to us is the greatest reality? Many things are true—what to us is the truth? Many words are important—what to us is *the* word? Answer not in the language of decent custom or technical phrase, but from the heart. We have all said at some time more or less definitely, "We believe in God, the Creator of the world, in Jesus Christ his Son and express image, in the Holy Spirit, the witness

within the soul." When we believe thus truly, then we have the true principles of living. We own the Divine government, acknowledge its representative, honor its form of life. But our belief becomes an empty word, unless with enlarged knowledge and experience, it is constantly renewed; and as we pass into new fields of thought, action, observation, we subdue this added territory to the rightful sovereignty, and interpret all things in the light of Divine truth. Have we done this—are we doing it? Or have we left our faith behind us, and in our world of business or pleasure, do we find ourselves either utterly without God, or with Him only in the most vague and distant idea? True faith is not overcome by the world, but overcomes the world.

We learn a great many things as our years pass, and there is a knowledge—do we not know it? that increaseth sorrow. Such is all the knowledge that shuts out the light of God, and leads man away from a filial faith in the Eternal Parent and the heavenly home. Such stores indeed increase our nominal domain, but only as he would enlarge his estate who were to conquer Sahara and pitch his tent among desert sands where no living water is.

Faith—the faith that God is Father of men—that he is in Christ, and through Him will visit us in the soul and the life, makes all things new—constantly leads us into new experience of Divine truth, and makes old things appear in a new light. This is no narrow creed for the recluse or the mystic. It is for men of all tempers and conditions. Nay, they need it most, whose pursuits are most

likely to chain them down to the earth. For them indeed occasional leisure and recreation has no small solace. But, the best solace for world-weariness is the rest of the soul in God; the mind's trust in the greatest of realities, the Being of beings. All pleasure that deadens this trust but adds to the weariness which it would charm away and is the serpent's whisper, that promises the peace which comes only from the heavenly dove. Above all our prudence, all our labors and expedients, we are compelled to look for the true light. Revive, increase our faith, and straightway all things are new. God reveals new features of his Providence, and things familiar have a new expression, and speak no longer only of the earth.

Who can recur thus to first principles and find from them better light and peace, without carrying the renewing influence into the sphere of the affections? Here the Divine Word has a voice for us—a voice too much neglected because identified either with a perplexing theological system or a shallow sentimentalism. God is love, and he that loveth not knoweth not God. This truth came from Him who made the soul, and knows well its wants. Bring it near to us and feel its renovating power. There seems always indeed to be a peculiar peril in moralizing upon the affections, and they are very apt to be chilled by the precepts that most insist upon their vitality and warmth. But the Christian Gospel is little disposed to waive its imperious claims from fear of the metaphysician or the sentimentalist. It says Love God and the breth-

ren, and bids us make this truth practical. As the years pass, instead of having less affection, we ought to have more. A true life always has more, as it enlarges its experience and its faculty—not indeed more of that superficial sensibility which is the burden of so many moon-struck rhymesters and the great staple of the common romancers, but more of that divine charity, that vital good-will, which holds filial communion with the Father, and, striving to be perfect even as he is perfect, carries the light and warmth of its presence into every sphere of life. In fact, the highest human wisdom is affectionate as it is mature. The novice in thought may be sharp and crabbed, but the sage is tolerant and kind. He who sees the truth in its reality, sees that it is the form which contains and expresses goodness. If there be a kind of intellectual power that is bitter and malicious, it is sure to be only some shape of low cunning or some perversion of the better reason—some perversion that shows Lucifer's fall, if it shine with something of his light. The Master and they who learned of him were full of love as of wisdom. Such is the plan of God's moral government based upon the nature of his own being.

The Father calls us to be followers of him as dear children, and in the sober thought of mature years to cherish more than the impulsive affection of childhood. He demands that our whole life-plan should be guided, nay, pervaded with good-will. If there be less sensitiveness upon the surface of the character, there should be a deeper sentiment within. He is ready to help us win the

grace, which he commends. Through devout thought, whether of meditation or prayer—through every act which brings us near to himself, whether of self-denying humanity or of common neighborly kindness, he is ready to impart to the soul something of the fulness of his Spirit, and renew our being in its central spring.

We need this influence in our near affinities and remoter relations. The ice gathers about us, and should be melted away. The most intimate ties become dull and indifferent through custom, and the nearest friends, because of their nearness, lose interest as if estranged. In the same Divine fountain we refresh every home feeling and social sympathy. Realizing anew our relation to God, we are ready to see more of his goodness in all things around, and regard every aspect of humanity, as a call upon us to appreciate his love for us by our own for his creatures. The point of view is at once changed, and we look upon our fellow-beings no longer in the spirit of harsh critics, exacting all things and owing nothing, but as ourselves dependants upon Divine favor, and owing mercy even as we have received. Every human tie is in peril, when this sentiment is forgotten. When its force is felt, every sphere of life has a blessing. Home wears a new smile, and its mutual deference repeats the great law of Heaven. Strifes among kindred and acquaintances cease. The sternest censor of the follies and vices of mankind mingles mercy with his judgment, and considers with thoughtful compassion the infirmities at which the cynic scoffs. Because he opens his heart, he does not shut his eyes, but with judg-

ment keen, yet tender and forbearing, in a spirit wise and benign, nay, Christlike, he looks upon the strange drama of human life, and whilst he cannot wholly solve its problem, sees enough of God in the universe and among men to submit the ultimate solution to the Divine Power, and finds a very sure way of helping on the Divine plans by a life of justice, energy and good-will. Who of us does not need more of this spirit, more sense of God's love to us, as the great source of kind affection to one another?

For want of it, and of the filial faith in which it has its root, we wither up, and our best strength is lost. Nay, our very work languishes—our labor, whatever it may be, loses its zest. There is no man of generous mind, who has not at some time accepted his life-work in a spirit truly religious, feeling that its burdens are to be borne in a Christian temper, and its duties done with reference to exalted aims. But how often the better purpose languishes, and we pursue our toil away from the fountains of true life, separating the spheres which God has joined together, robbing our daily life of the freshness and power, which our youthful zeal possessed without care, and which need only to be truly cared for to be preserved, nay, to grow in vigor. It is not always so with us, but too often; and there are none who do not need renovation in respect to their life-plan and work. Some things we should do, that we have not done—some things, that we have done, should have been left undone. There is much efficacy in a sober and honest review of our personal career, of what we have

achieved, suffered, gained, lost, and of what has been our use alike of our successes and disappointments. God has given to us something of his own power of judgment, and we are the better either by the rebuke or the encouragement of the "Ill-done" or the "Well-done," pronounced by ourselves upon ourselves. More power still comes from bringing all the higher resources of our being upon our labor, refusing to become the serfs of a slavish routine of task-work, and keeping our hours and weeks fresh alike by the faculties that we exert, and the aims to which we look. Happy, indeed, the man, whatever be the sphere of his action, whose being is renewed rather than exhausted by his toil. Only a filial faith and love can insure this blessing. A cheerful temper is much, but not all; and no merely animal spirits can suffice to renovate the mind under so many vicissitudes and disappointments as most lives present. A man's *spirit* is the chief fact in determining his *spirits*, and the spirit can be kept fresh and strong only by communion with the God who gave it. They who take the work of life as given by God in kindness, and as to be done faithfully and cheerfully, filially, keep and enlarge their power. Whatever their sphere, they wait upon the Lord, and they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength—they shall mount up with wings as eagles—they shall run and not be weary—they shall walk and not faint.

Thus following the leadings of Divine Providence, we find the true fountain of life. All things are ever new, and in our faint human experience we are able to know

something of the bliss of that Infinite and Omniscient, to whom all things are known—to whom there is no past or future, yet whose is the fulness of an ever-renewing life, the great I Am, from everlasting to everlasting. Existence becomes more serene, yet more earnest; less impassioned, not less affectionate; less impulsive, but far more interesting. There are two kinds of renewal, distant as are earth and heaven. The one comes from the novelty of a constant variety, the other from the freshness of an ever truer life. Just across the sea the exile of Patmos could have found an excellent example to place in contrast with the spirit of renewal which he urged. The Athenian—and he is in this respect more favored with followers than in his Attic refinement—spent his time in seeking for some new thing. Common life was stupid, its business was contemptible and fit only for slaves. Different the spirit, as the lot of this novelty hunter from that of the Christian with his ever renewed mind. The one finds what is new by skimming over surfaces, the other by drawing from inexhaustible depths. The one scatters his forces as he seeks to refresh them, the other concentrates his powers in the very process of renovation. The one yields to a passion for mental dissipation that burns and wastes like a fever, the other follows a law of life, whose pulses beat in ever serener health—nay, beat in ever-renewing vigor, and sound no funeral marches to the grave. In short, the one indulges in a mental distraction that has in itself the principle of exhaustion; the other is nurtured by the Divine aliment which gives a life that is eternal.

Are not our own experience and observation full of illustrations of the truth that has been presented. Are not history and biography constant witnesses of the ever-renovating power of a genuine faith, and love, and work, and also of the fate of worldly passion to exhaust its own springs of enjoyment. How signal an illustration we may take from the destiny of two men of the last century, who, more than any others, moved France and England—the nations to which they spoke. Mirabeau, a man of robust frame and singular native eloquence, was cut down in the very meridian of his day by a disease which was an expressive close and consequence of the fitful fever of his life of passion. His last words, in their gorgeous rhetoric, showed with what opiates he had drugged his soul: "Sprinkle me with perfumes, crown me with flowers, and thus let me sink into the eternal sleep." Within that very month, a far different death-scene was presented across the British Channel. An old man of nearly four-score years and ten, rests peacefully upon his bed, surrounded by a company of friends, who feel quite as much joy as grief, as they look upon his face and hear his words. Although of frame naturally delicate, and of gifts by no means brilliant, he has moved the hearts of myriads by his appeals, and won a name better than that of founders of empires. The very week previous he had continued his round of labors, and his strength was not abated as he pleaded his Master's cause. He sank to his rest in God with the words of the anthem,

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath,"

on his lips, and the strain which was broken by the touch of death seemed to his companions to be finished by a voice from the spiritual world, saying:

> "Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
> My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
> While life, and thought, and being last,
> Or immortality endures."

Mirabeau and Wesley! Thus different are the ends of wilful passion and unswerving fidelity. All lives, according as they are true or false, renew this contrast.

"Behold, I create all things new," saith the Lord. For good or for ill, this decree must be applied to us. In some way we are all changing as the years pass. Our lives are wasting away, unless they are renovated by a truer spirit, and thus winning ever more than they lose. What do we most need that time may be ever newer and happier, and the hours move on neither with lagging weariness nor drunken haste, but in the Divine order marked out for them by their Lord?

Are there not some things to be put off, as well as some things to be put on? Answer honestly as we look the New Year in the face—answer as to a messenger from God. What weight are we carrying, that we need to lay aside? What evil habit is fixing itself upon us, shutting out the light of God, chilling the better affections, deadening the nobler powers, and threatening, perhaps, beneath its insidious smile to take from existence more

of its beauty and joy and strength? Let each consider well his own besetting sin, and put it off. With the falling burden, scales fall from his eyes—he sees God anew. For him the former things have passed away—all things are become new. What makes our being fresher and happier than the conviction that the coming years are better than the past!

Off with the old burdens, and put on the new armor. There is something for each of us to do—something for each one of us specific and peculiar as our own individuality—something for all of us as universal as our common humanity. The specific thing and the universal good pursue as if for life itself. God bless us in the striving, and crown us in the work. Each year in its sober experience give us new hopes for ourselves and the future of our race.

New Year.

Solicitude of Parents

SOLICITUDE OF PARENTS.

Our thoughts turn now more particularly to the circle of home relations, and we propose to give some plain views of them with an especial eye to the temptations of city life. The duty of parents is the topic first in order.

Few if any words are given in the Scriptures to persuading parents to love their children, or to wish to provide for them. The affection is taken for granted, and they who have it not are set aside by themselves as monsters. If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

It is not upon the parental sentiment itself, but upon its due direction, that Christianity rests its emphasis; as well it may, for what sentiment has gone more astray from the true mark, and in mistaken kindness hurt those whom it would most bless. "What man," asks our Saviour, "would give his son a stone instead of bread, or a serpent instead of a fish?" Not one, if he really knew it or saw it. Yet what is more frequent than such wrong indirectly done?

Take the first and most obvious form of parental

solicitude, the form literally connected with the question just cited—we mean the physical maintenance of children. It would be wasting words in this or any respectable assembly, to try to prove that parents should provide food and clothing for their offspring. Yet here, and every where, in our mode of making this provision, many very grave questions may arise. Kind feeling is not enough. Without knowledge and forethought, we may hurt where we wish to help—we may kill where we wish to cure. At every step we need better counsel than any instinctive fondness, or childish caprice, or worldly fashion. The Creator has a lesson for us in the use of all his gifts, and if we do not heed it, what we give as bread may turn out a stone, and what seems to us a fish may sting like a serpent.

In providing food, clothing, air, exercise, for our children, we are to study those solemn and inexorable laws which God has enacted for the rule of the body. In this lower court of creation there is no pardoning power, and the wrong done to the constitution in childhood is a wrong for a lifetime. We apprehend that in no one point is our American society more in error and more at variance, not only with natural laws, but even with the best European standard, than in the physical education of children. They are fed often on the trash of the confectioner, instead of the simple aliments nearest the hints of nature, and by improper dress and hours they are forced into a precocious maturity of mind and body, equally hurtful to both.

Does any one doubt the importance or dignity of such caution? The doubt vanishes the moment we see the connection between physical education, and the whole tone of thought and feeling—nay, the entire aim of life. The tastes for food, and dress, and amusement, cherished in children of tender years, may be committing them to a judicious or a corrupt method of life—may be their initiation into a school of self-control and wisdom, or passion and extravagance. The drunkard, the sot, nay, the debauchee, may date their wretchedness from childhood. Many a family has been ruined by habits of extravagance that began in the finery and feasting of the nursery. They that dwell in cities should take close heed to the prevalent danger, and not think themselves safe merely because they do as other people do. Consider how common the error is to mistake precocity for promise—to disturb the sacred reserve of nature—to tear open the curtained bud of childhood, and boast of the forced growth so ruinous to the tender plant, and then let us learn anew to respect the bidding of the Creator and follow his appointed way. Here we should be willing to take a stand as nonconformists, and have it appear in the beginning, that we are not educating our children to be the apes of the world's fashions, or slaves of its caprices, but to be rational and moral creatures, a blessing to their home and community, a light in the kingdom of God. Let them learn early to find happiness in common things—to enjoy simple pleasures—to love the glow of healthful action above the fever of artificial excitements, the constant bounties of nature beyond the costly gifts of luxury.

What we have said applies more directly to providing for children during their tender years. In rude communities here the care mostly stops, and the boy at least, as soon as he is strong enough to be master of his limbs, is left pretty much to take care of himself. But as society becomes more refined and luxurious, it is very obvious that the solicitude of parents looks more towards providing for the maturer years than for the minority of their children. It becomes, perhaps, the absorbing question, how shall we establish them properly in life—what effort or self-denial must we use to secure their future success?—a great question, and one which troubles many an earnest mind, and heaves society itself with misgivings.

It often presents itself in a very tangible form, and by some is confined to one point—to concern for property. I will not disparage the desire of parents to secure a comfortable living to their children. But it is safe to say that this desire is strong enough when compared with matters more essential even in their bearing on a comfortable living. Surely the chief assurance of a sufficient livelihood is a good practical education. A reasonable man will not think it important to leave more than a frugal competence to his children, yet he ought to think himself unkind, nay cruel, if he spare any labor or sacrifice needed to educate them to do their part effectively and happily in the world. A large inheritance is easily lost, and may be retained without adding any happiness or dignity to its owner or the community, but a good education stands by its possessor, the strength of his trials and the ornament of his joys.

We need to look well to this at a time when, under the very name of education, foul wrong is done to the active energies, and a systematic imbecility of mind and body has the stamp of elegance. That only is a good education which so stores the mind and brings out the powers as to fit one to take an honest place in life, and do well the work given us to do. Such a culture will have an eye upon the uncertainties of fortune, and prepare the pupil to provide for himself, and all who are reasonably dependent upon him. Such a culture it is the duty of every parent to give, and the right of every child to receive. It is clear, however, that it cannot be given without going in the face of many dainty prejudices, which are so ready to pamper unreasonable wants and slight the plain utilities. The Hebrew laws required, that children, even those of nobles should be taught some useful art, and the Saviour of men and the chief of his apostles were bred in accordance with this law. There is no security against shameful servitude short of this, that a youth shall have enough in himself, know enough, and can do enough, to take and keep an honorable place in the world. Too often this great truth is slighted, and men toil in such a way as to procure for their children a dainty training that enlarges the surface of their wants, whilst it lessens the domain of their energies, and so puts a mill-stone upon a son's back, whilst thinking to give him bread.

Yet more sternly we must carry out the doctrine of the need of an education essentially self-relying. The father has and should have more tender solicitude for the

daughter than the son, and there is no affection that the blessed God has breathed into the human heart more beautiful and holy than this, giving as it does such grace to the rudest and the most refined homes, teaching gentle speech to many a rough peasant, and imbuing the most cultivated man with a delicacy and tenderness beyond any of the charms of courts or chivalry. Yet this sentiment needs to be wise as well as kind; nay, wise in order to be kind; and a just father will strive to train his daughter to be equal to either fortune. However large or small his fortune, he will remember its uncertainties, and beware of sanctioning the too prevalent folly which regards woman as born to be petted and dependent, and brands a rational and self-relying education as masculine and ungraceful. If we have our eyes open, we must see the wretchedness of this system, and regard every daughter as cruelly treated who is not enabled without loss of self-respect, in case of need, to take a stand for herself, and prefer to an uncongenial marriage or a degrading dependence, reliance upon her own arts of accomplishment or utility. The same preparation that fits her to meet the time of trial, fits her to adorn prosperity, and to be that noble creature, the woman who guides an affluent household with energy and love, and who adds to the graces most prized in the social circle the grace that is born of God and radiates the light of Heaven.

Of course it is utterly idle to urge the need of such an education for sons and daughters, by limiting its uses

solely to worldly advantage. We go up to the true basis of life for firm ground to build upon. Take that ground decidedly, and then we view all true culture as part of the training of souls under the Kingdom of God. We are not to live by bread alone, but by every Divine word, by all of God's gifts to us. They are cruel parents who slight the moral and spiritual wants of their children and train them in worldly passions. This is, in the saddest sense, giving them a stone instead of the Bread of Life. So we all think and are ready to say. Take care lest our conduct belies our words. Whatever its position or professions may be, that is a wretched household, whose polity is not based upon a Divine standard—which does not acknowledge a rectitude above the world's ways and breathe faith in God and things eternal. The very discipline of a true home will be modelled after the heavenly order, and will try to win the spirit of the benignant Father of all, who tempers firmness with kindness so wonderfully in the government of his creatures.

Firmness is not enough—kindness is not enough, but the two must go together. Firmness without kindness becomes the stony austerity that crushes the will into servile conformity instead of training it to filial obedience; kindness without firmness readily becomes a feeble expediency that changes with the hour in a facility serpentine in more senses than one. Firmness with kindness gives a discipline authoritative and flexible, applying just principles in a mild prudence suited to all times and needs. Of old perhaps the rigid temper most abounded, and

austerity made parental rule a rod of iron; but now the other extreme most prevails, and a feeble indulgence allows self-will to be the law of childhood, and fosters in many a dwelling a juvenile jacobinism, which needs only time and chance to ripen into utter anarchy. This error does cruel wrong to parent and child—to the child by fostering an ungovernable temper, a perverse caprice that scoffs at all restraint and chafes even at the limitations which God has imposed; to the parent by bringing upon him the contempt of those who owe him respect, and by the painful conviction that the indulgence begun in apparent kindness has been as fatal as wilful severity. Away with the folly and the puny sentimentalism from which it springs! Let us look at the law of God founded in the written Word and in the very nature of things. The family is the safeguard of society—a government founded by Heaven itself. Parents are to rule, children are to obey. This principle, if carried out with energy and discretion, will adapt itself to the various ages and circumstances of life. The element of authority will be imbued with the attractive power of the truth and love upon which it rests, and as the child grows into youth or maturity, the authority that trained him, without losing its dignity, will appear less and less an arbitrary will—nay, authority itself will seem but the sterner aspect of persuasion.

For all this we need an unworldly faith and a spiritual mind. They that would nurture others in the true life must themselves be nurtured upon its true element.

For themselves they must breathe the prayer for daily bread in a true sense of its meaning—a true sense of dependence on God for moral power as for bodily strength. Nothing short of a temper and purpose truly religious will make the household a school of faith and a home of wisdom and peace. We are apt to be too negligent, indeed, of modes of instruction and forms of worship. Too often a parent neglects to tell his children what is deepest in his own heart, and with many not wholly worldly persons, the years pass away without any regular habits of Christian teaching and worship in the family. The remedy cannot come from mere formalism, but it must spring from a truer heart—more of the right spirit showing itself in the right way—in all wisdom and prudence, charity and devotion.

Speaking thus, who of us does not see a startling thought staring us in the face—the thought that our own personal character is the measure of our influence, and that we cannot expect to teach or impress what we have not taken to our own hearts. We cannot cheat our children into the virtue which we affect, for they will find us out, and distinguish what we do and are, from what we say. Influence cannot rise above the level of character, nor the fountain above the fountain-head. What motive to a truer life—what warning against vice and godlessness—what encouragement in all good—that the chief patrimony of children is the character of their parents, and with this treasure small gifts are wealth, and without this treasure rich gifts are poor indeed. Unhappy is the man who leaves to his children the influence of a heart hard as stone and

a worldliness wily as a serpent! Precious the influence —blessed the memory of a parent, whose life has made the ways of wisdom pleasant and peaceful, secured to his offspring a childhood pure and happy, given a sacred and cheerful remembrance to be the handmaid of an immortal hope.

The affections, it has been said, press downward more strongly than they rise upward, and parents love their children more than children can love them in return. If this were so, it would but the more illustrate the fact, that life is not utterly selfish, and men live not for themselves alone. It is true, that we do not live for ourselves alone. The merchant at his counting-houses has thoughts beyond his gold and merchandize—visions more fair and kindly than these; and the hard-handed workman who does his ruder labor, spares of his earnings for his children at school. But the love is not all on one side, although time may be needed to adjust the balance, and teach childhood to appreciate a true parental care. God holds the balance, and will make it true. In the motive and in the result, he secures the reward of fidelity. Time and eternity will show, that the love which he has inspired shall win harvests of blessings that cannot perish.

Reverence in Children.

REVERENCE IN CHILDREN.

The Ten Commandments, the foundations of all law, both religious and civil, among civilized nations, are divided, all are aware, into two tables: the first treating of duties relating directly to God—the second treating of duties relating to man—the two covering the essential grounds of religion and morals. The command to honor father and mother begins the second table of the Law. Why should it not? for what so fitly stands at the head of the moral code, as the law that puts order into the household? The family is the form of government, first in time and first in importance. Home is older than church or court; a parent's authority prior to that of priest or judge. With the family, social order began—without family union, social order must end.

There is something striking in the transition from the first to the second table—the transition from Jehovah's assertion of his own sovereignty to his tender regard for the welfare of men. We seem to be looking down from the awful mountain with its barren crags into the peaceful valley with its pleasant homes and grassy lawns, rejoicing that the summits pealing with thunder send down re-

freshing breezes and fruitful showers into those plains below.

Looking up to God, who claims of us supreme homage as his due, and then in his own sovereign right urges upon us to fulfil our dues to each other, we speak now of the duties of children or the honor to be rendered by them to parents.

Do any ask what are the grounds of the Commandments? The grounds are obvious, and the law, which God enacts, instead of being an arbitrary decree, is in entire harmony with the nature of things. It would perhaps be needless to dwell on these grounds, were there not something in the temper of our times, that calls them in question—in fact, certain notions of intellectual liberty among theorists, that combine with the passions and caprices of youth to unsettle many a household, and threaten the peace of society itself. Against the sentimentalist, who makes light of all natural ties to glorify the individual's own intuitions or affinities, and against the little rebel, who comes to the same conclusion by a much shorter process, we urge the Divine law, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Honor them, because God bids it, and bids it not merely in the written code, but by the whole order of his providence, by the very constitution of society. However we may dispute about the best form or true foundation of government—maintain monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, to be the best form—declare Divine law, social compact, or popular will, to be the true foundation, all must agree

in the Divine origin of the family and the Divine right of parental government. The instincts of nature, the words of revelation, the dictates of experience and expediency, all agree in this, and all illustrate the mind of God, the Creator of the family. The mind of God himself speaks or should speak through the parent to the child, so, that filial obedience is fitly another name for piety; so, that prayer itself borrows its most hallowed word from the reverence nurtured at home.

Trace out the law of dependence, and see how fully it urges the commandment—the law of dependence that rests with parents so much of the welfare of the child. Not merely food, clothing, and home, but all the higher goods of life, experience, wisdom, virtue, are to be looked for thus. As a general rule, benignant Providence itself has its chosen almoner in father and mother, and the gifts are blessed as they are received in reverence. We may indeed suppose monstrous cases, in which unnatural parents exact such folly or wrong, that obedience ceases to be a virtue. Such cases are not frequent enough to alter the general law, and even in these, a true child, in refusing to conform to what is evil in the sight of God, will do it in such a way as still to keep the commandment, and treat tenderly even a perverse father, and expostulate with his tyranny in a temper fitted more to subdue than irritate its violence. Such monstrous cases need little notice in any Christian community, where parents are generally ready enough to do the best, and give the most in their power for their children. In fact, for them, the Decalogue has

no law, as if nature needed no decree to enforce parental love, and the affections of themselves pressed heavily enough downwards. The great need was and is of enforcing the obligation, that looks upward from child to parent. Our modern culture, with all its scope and refinement, has no substitute for this obligation; nay, needs it more than ever to check the wilfulness and laxity so likely to come from precocious fancy and unbridled temper. Experience is constantly showing, that even the external promise connected with the commandment meets the wants of our own times also, and now, as of old, filial obedience secures an efficient life and peaceful civilization,—"that it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God shall give." How many bright and dark chapters of recent history show how close is the connection between stability of society and filial respect—between allegiance to every worthy institution and the discipline that learns to regard a superior authority at home. This outward sanction the Gospel accepts, and carries it into the spiritual kingdom. By many a precept the apostles enforce the ocmmand, and by word and example, by the beatitudes of the mount, and the obedience of the cross, our Saviour imparts new blessing and worth to its observance.

We have a foundation then to build upon, and filial respect rests upon the Word of God, the welfare of the home, the good of society, and the peace of the soul. Let the sentiment be worthy of the Divine foundation. If

worthy it will appear first of all as a feeling of affectionate reverence. It will not be worship as with the Chinese absolutist, nor mere friendship, as in the code of many a radical. The parent is of the same nature with the child, and is not to be adored; he is superior in age, experience and authority, and should have more than the friendly courtesy of an equal. Superior in degree, though not in kind, he is to be regarded with affectionate respect and deference. Any subjection more or less than this comes of wrong, and leads to wrong. To exact utter servitude is tyranny—to lower reasonable authority into flattery, entreaty, or apology, is an imbecile indulgence which a child should be as unwilling to ask as a parent to give.

If any hearers are ready to quarrel with us for presuming to define the quality and conditions of one of the great social sentiments, and to say that all the affections are best let alone without any forcing process, we are not troubled for a reply. No modern folly has been more thoroughly put down by analysis and experience, than the sentimentalist's notion, that the affections are wholly their own law, and are not to be trained under reason, conscience and religion. Even in those sentiments which have most of the spontaneous play of genius—those which rejoice in poetry, music, and all the beautiful arts, the perceptions must first be trained to the nicest sense of the truth of things, and the rigid discipline of every true artist shames the folly of the dreamers who would make it appear, that the great art of life, as a school of the affections, is to be left to itself. No—our principles have vast

power over our feelings, and they who from the beginning are trained to accept the great loyalties of a divine kingdom, will be loyal in their affections as in their creed, and their affections will come forth and grow up as the vine does by help of the very trellis which overlooks it.

The filial sentiment thus accepted and nurtured will not be idle, but will show itself in the tone of manners, the rule of conduct, the law of life.

Manners are but lesser morals, and closely connected with the greater morals. Good manners begin at home, and if they do not begin there, the desire for them is apt to end in poor affectation. The soul of politeness is mutual deference, and where should this have its origin but in the respect most directly sanctioned by God? Too often the true filial honor is forgotten, and, perhaps, from thoughtlessness more than disrespect, children are sometimes seen usurping the prerogatives of age, speaking in tones of petulant authority, and crowding themselves into the places of elders. The best place for them is their own place. Their own dignity, as well as that of their parents, is best furthered by the deference, that gives the household its best order and makes it the school of the graces, that adorn society with its pleasing gradations, and cheer the way to its best virtues. Full enough is the temptation, especially in cities, to fall short of this true deference and to rob childhood and youth of their best character. Manners, instead of being nurtured on the Christian root, are left too much to the dancing-master, and there are hosts

of boys and girls adept in postures and airs proper for the ballet, and strangers to the reverence and simplicity that most honor them in honoring their elders. Precocious passion for dress and society is the bane of the one, and ridiculous affectation of manhood, especially of its follies, is the shame of the other. The girl, instead of being calmly at rest in a child's healthful slumber, is aping the belle in the ball-room; and the boy is walking the street with his cigar, perhaps boasting of his powers at the bottle, instead of being where he should be, in his bed, getting strength for true manliness, not fevering himself into a ludicrous manikin. "Learn to show piety at home," is thus another form of the ancient law, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

The sentiment so essential to good manners will show itself as a rule of conduct, and filial honor will take the form of obedience. During the years of dependence this obedience is to be entire, for the parent must think and act for the child. No matter what precocity of memory or imagination, what privileges of education or amount of attainments, may seem sometimes to reverse the order of precedence, the child is to follow the parent's counsels, and in so doing will gain alike in wisdom and discipline, for the experience of age is wiser than the pert wit of youth, and submission to a superior will is essential to a true schooling for the vicissitudes of life. It is not well to overstrain prerogative, and to insist on obedience as a sacrifice, where it might be made an attraction, if the reasons of the case are fully set forth. Nor is it well to

make obedience wholly dependent upon a statement of reasons, for many things must be done for reasons that youth cannot appreciate, and kindness is never so decided as when the impatient shortsightedness of childhood is overruled by the far-seeing wisdom of maturity. Reason there should be in every request; but if the request were allowed to wait until the reasons could be understood, parental care would cease with the first restraint, and childhood would be left to itself at the first task or pain. God himself is our helper here, for he, who calls us in so many things to walk by faith without sight, has fitted youth for the same discipline, and made mild authority in the end more attractive and efficient than premature argument or feeble flattery.

Obedience, thus considered, will not be servile but filial, and will find its own honor in doing honor to its guardians. It will lead children to ask constantly what they can do for the happiness of the family and the welfare of its members. This duty is too little thought of, especially where there is none of that pressure of want which compels children to help in the maintenance of the family. No matter how great the wealth of parents or the retinue of servants on the watch for every care, there is still place for the earnest co-operation of each member of the family, and no refinements of living have abolished the duty of mutual help, and the grace of mutual deference. In most families the services of the children are needed for many friendly offices of greater or less importance, and none will deny that the comfort of every household is

closely connected with what the children do or fail to do for its welfare. So early does the work, the responsible work of life begin, and so early may its springs of beneficence be opened.

Let any true household illustrate what we mean. What beauty in the filial confidence that reveals its troubles and needs, and asks counsel of superior wisdom! What comfort in the countless little services that lighten a father or mother's care, or soothe their troubles! What grace in the unbought courtesies that youth may throw around the home, the refined deference, the kind remembrances too often left to the parade of drawing-rooms, but the proper ornament of the family circle! What power over the pains of sickness, or the languor of convalescence, in the solicitude and consideration which children may show, and showing, may bring to the weary pillow a balm more healing than medical art! And if stinted means require frugal expenditures, or even the active labor of the young, what worth in the filial thoughtfulness that anticipates the necessary economy, instead of repining encourages frugality, and asks to be useful instead of insisting on being indulged.

And when fortune, station, or intellectual eminence reward youthful aspiration, the aspirant never wins more respect than when he makes his parents his confidants and companions. Here our common nature is not at fault, for whenever in any public exercise or examination a young person does remarkably well, we all think at once of the parents, and the pleasure of the assembly is not complete

until the people have confirmed their own enjoyment by sympathy with the father and mother. There is great power in this fact, and what it implies—great power in the fact that children honor parents by being truly honorable, and repay best the sacrifices of so many anxious years by making their own lives a credit and comfort to father and mother. This benefit lasts as long as life itself, and the integrity and efficiency of mature years carries out to the limit of existence the affectionate reverence of childhood.

Here the whole world is one, and the human heart is the same in all ages, and history and experience meet. What state of society can be blind to the meaning of the imprecation which was pronounced at the entrance into the promised land, and joined in the same doom the idolator and him who should "set light by his father and mother?" What philosophy can gainsay the sage of the Book of Proverbs, whose sententious moralizing rises into prophetic grandeur as he speaks of the unnatural son: "The eye that mocketh at his father or refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Who needs any interpretation of the feelings of David, or Joseph, or Solomon, in their joy or trial? How heartrending was the grief of the Psalmist over his recreant son—"Would to God, I had died for thee, my son, my son!" What beauty, as well as simplicity in the inquiry of Joseph for his father, when the prime minister of Egypt dismissed his courtly train, and weeping aloud, could only ask "Doth my father yet live?" What grandeur far above its gold and gems sur-

rounded the throne of Solomon, when he rose to meet his mother, and called her to a seat at his right hand. "And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay." What pathos and sublimity in the Saviour of men, when, embracing home and heaven in his parting words on the Cross, he commended his spirit to the Eternal Father, and intrusted his mother to the beloved disciple's care. We need no more than this to show how the gospel glorifies the law, and crowns its morality and piety alike in its perfect love—"Woman, behold thy son"—"Disciple, behold thy mother."

Hear the amen that goes from Calvary to Sinai—and Honor thy father and thy mother!

Brothers and Sisters.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

When Cain asked "Am I my brother's keeper?" it seemed a very strange question to come from a man who had just murdered his brother and held him so cruelly in his keeping. Fear led Cain to diguise his guilt by repudiating his obligation, through an interrogation more negative than a flat denial. What he said in guilty fear, may are now ready to say in pretended humanity, and it is one of the conceits of our time to make light of ties of kindred in the name of a world-wide philanthropy. A melo-dramatic patriotism not particularly famous for domestic attachment has been ready to swear brotherhood to the whole nation, perhaps the whole race, and many a scape-grace who has been a sad plague to his own kindred, has been heard shouting at the top of his voice the three noble watchwords of which fraternity is a climax. Philanthropists sometimes labor under a similar error, and people who have had no especial solicitude or felicity in helping their own families and neighbors, presume to despise such near at hand interests as trivial, and seek to reform the world in a wholesale way. Professed Christians are not wholly free from the error. Some certainly there are who are ready to *brother* and *sister* all Christen-

dom with most profuse generosity of tongue, who show their little sense of the meaning of the term by pinching selfishness towards those of their own blood, that seems to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

It is well, that large views of social obligation are making headway, and that Christianity has so mightily rebuked the narrowness of exclusive cliques and clanships. But if humanity is to be true in its progress, it must be true in its source; and if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love not merely God whom he hath not seen, but the brother whom he hath not seen? In fact what is regard for our brother but the first and most obvious application of the second of the two great commandments? Our brother is our next neighbor, and even our humanity must begin with him, that it may be really worth any thing. We turn now to the collateral relations of the household, or the duties of brothers and sisters. Sacred and suggestive subject, speaking to each of us in the tones of our own peculiar experience. Let it speak to the conscience as well as to the sensibilities and the memory.

Where shall we begin but at the beginning, that is with the will of God, which is the ground of every duty? The family, as we have seen and believe, is the first form of society, a government founded by the Creator. All that can be said in favor of its peace and order, goes to set forth its collateral as well as its ascending and descending ties—to urge the obligations of brothers and sisters as

well as parents and children. Co-operation between the former is as essential to the home, as are protection and dependence between the latter.

But to come more closely to the point, is it not true that proper respect for parents urges the duty now under consideration and just filial love must needs be fraternal? Children cannot be true to their parents without being true to each other, and the welfare and charm of the household depends in no small degree upon the mutual help and moral harmony of its younger members. Children are not regarded as so many separate units, but as an organic whole, as members one of another; and when they are considerate and harmonious, they have new grace and worth in the parent's eye, more so to his heart, than the features of the fairest landscape where the particulars combine in the whole, and light, shade, grove and river, hill and valley—fair in themselves, are fairer together, can possibly have to the eye of the lover of nature. What under the heavens is more pleasant and lovely than brethren who with all their differences of taste and temperament still agree in aim and spirit? It is indeed like the dew of Hermon, that threw its silver veil over mountain and valley, and refreshed and beautified each tree and flower with a baptism from heaven.

But this relation of fraternal love to filial is but one of its aspects. Brothers and sisters are related by what they owe directly to each other, as well as by what they owe to parents. The will of God, that bids them agree for their parents' sake, bids them also agree for their own

sake. Mutual educators of each other they must be, and by means far more powerful than school-books or lessons. They are constantly together, and this intercourse must be a selfish collision, if it be not a friendly reciprocity. In childhood, they must needs be frequent rivals for the favors and duties of the home, subjects of indulgences or sacrifices, that must awaken strife, unless they are shared in mutual deference. With childhood, however, the relation does not end, but may have in mature years its gravest importance, for in the order of nature parents are likely to be first taken from the world, and to all human view they may be beyond the reach of kindness or unkindness. But the relation of children to each other promises to last far longer, may create between the elder and younger a relation parental as well as filial, and for good or ill it must in some way continue as long as life itself. How essential, then, that a tie so enduring should be rightly regarded, and that in childhood, youth and maturity, it should keep its benignant hold over the family!

Nor does its importance end here. The method of God is, that the affections shall grow outward from within, and that being trained in kindness at home, men should be prepared to show good will to each other in all the concerns of life. As the patriarchal dispensation, in the grand course of ages, widened into the universality of the gospel, so in every true life, a just family culture is to expand into a generous humanity, that learns at home how to speak of a broader brotherhood, and a higher fatherhood. Whether God's method is not wiser than man's

let experience show by contracting the windy declamation, that mistakes rhetorical generalities for comprehensive benevolence, and the judicious, unostentations beneficence that carries out in all its relations the sober good will cherished in a wholesome household discipline, and so on a true pattern strives to build up the larger household of faith. The one begins at the root, and so branches out in blessing—the other would begin with the branches, which wither away when parted from the root.

So then in the will of God, revealed in the constitution of the family, the welfare of its members, the spirit of humanity, we find the foundation of the duties of brothers and sisters. The fraternal sentiment must be in accordance. In all our affections, there must needs be some lights and shades that depend upon the individual's gifts and experience, for no man is a rule for all, and we must differ in our likings as in our looks. Yet all primal obligations have essential features in common; and the fraternal sentiment, although less instructive than the parental, and more complex than the filial, has quite as decidedly a character of its own. The phrenologist may not locate it in a special organ of the brain, and the metaphysician may not make of it an instinct by itself, but it has its root none the less in nature, and loses no interest from expanding so generously under true associations and culture. When true, the fraternal sentiment unites congeniality with consanguinity, and developes friendship from kindred blood, as the parted branches open into

leaves, and blossoms, and fruits, kindred in their aims as their source. Its nature is better shown by tracing out its just influence than by attempting to arrest its flitting shades of hue, or to analyze its constituent elements. Here, too, is the practical bearing of the subject, a bearing which many slight far more from thoughtlessness than from indifference. In what light are brothers or sisters called to regard each other?

Their first obvious duty is that of due consideration for each other. They are to consider each other's circumstances, needs, trials, dispositions, opportunities, and never allow selfishness or indifference to blind them to what belongs to them in common. Does this need to be said of persons who are so near, as of necessity to be always in each other's thoughts? Ah, what is more frequent and obvious, than that familiarity tempts indifference, and that our very primal duties, like the stars which are their emblems, are easily forgotten because they may at any time be seen? The things most significant are likely to be near at hand, and religion, like philosophy, finds its chief triumphs in opening the meaning of what God has brought to our very door. A part of the power of absence from home lies in breaking the spell of familiarity, and leading the absent one to look impartially upon the familiar circle, and upon his own place and conduct there. Many a youth or maiden has returned from a journey or voyage wiser far in sense of home duties than proud of the accomplishments of travel. True consideration will not need absence to teach this lesson, but from its calm point of

view the absent one will survey the common spheres of life, and try to live for others as under the eye of God.

In each family there will be decided need for mutual consideration, and there must be strife, unless there is mutual deference. All cannot have all the favors, and the division of them may embroil a household as bitterly as the division of an empire has embroiled rival heirs of thrones. Where means are limited, mutual sacrifices not always easy must be made, and few families pass many years without feeling the power of consideration, or of selfishness in meeting the privations that must go round their circle. When means are abundant, and every wish has ready wealth at its command, the form of forbearance may change, but its essential spirit is none the less needed. There will still be differences of talent, looks, manners, opportunities, health, experience, that require in the most prosperous household the same virtues, that give the humblest cottage its dignity and peace. In every family, there will be some call for peculiar consideration or regard to some member of it, according as sickness, infirmity, youth, age, deficient or extraordinary ability, may call upon the stronger to serve the weaker. What wretchedness when the call is slighted, even by one! Who can calculate the mischief wrought by a sensual or reckless brother, who makes every thing secondary to his own passions and pleasures, or by a frivolous and heartless sister, who makes a god of fashion and enslaves the whole house to her monstrous vanity! Who, too, can calculate the influence of a high-minded brother in guiding and cheering the

younger members of the family, or of a devoted and judicious sister in soothing every impatient humor with a face in which shines, perhaps, the light of the sainted mother's countenance? When all unite in some common solicitude, God gives their daily bread and cup a sacramental grace, and from some sufferer whom they watch over together, a mighty blessing, uniting, exalting them all, comes forth, and seems to say in the sacred name, "Ye have done it unto me."

Consideration will lead to confidence, and will banish deceit, that viper of society, from the hearth-stone, which too often warms it into life. Let confidence begin early, move the lips first lisping for utterance, and continue in maturity, when the world's folly that sometimes names itself experience shall try to teach disguise as prudence, and artifice as wisdom. Whatever we may think of the confessor, as an official person, confession is founded in the nature of things, and God bids us confess our faults one to another. Who ought to be confidential, if not those whose experience and destiny so unite their lives? I cannot even glance at the chief forms of this confidential relation. One aspect may be specified which is too often forgotten —that between brother and sister. If these were more candid advisers, each would be better for it—each imparting to each the counsel that each can give. With feminine insight and purity, what a kind and gentle, yet strict and earnest censor of youthful excess, the one may be. With manly judgment and honor, what a firm and scrupulous, yet tender and considerate adviser in reference to many

follies and dangers may the other be. Giddy as young people often are in their pleasures and caprices, it has sometimes seemed to me, that if a plan of life were to be drawn up by the youth of a family for each other, few treatises of morals would surpass it in purity of spirit or rectitude of principle. Some follies would be sure to fall. Where would intemperance and its kindred vices be, if sisters were taken as counsellors? Where would indecent costumes, immodest dances, equivocal friendships be, if brothers were more frequent advisers? This negative influence is not a tithe of the worth of the relation, which God in his infinite tenderness and wisdom has decreed—a relation so able to enrich ties of nature by every grace of mind and heart, and from likeness and unlikeness of constitution to develope one of the finest harmonies of our being. Its beauty cheers many a dark age of ancient rudeness, and adorns many of the brightest chapters of our modern culture. Would we know what brother and sister have been to each other, listen to the triumphal song of Miriam, as she braced anew the great heart of the lawgiver with timbrel and psalm; or look to the grave of Lazarus, where Mary and Martha stood with Him who was the Resurrection and the Life. Do we ask more modern instances, stand under the open heavens and remember how Caroline Herschel shared the vigils of their illustrious explorer—open the pages of Neander, and think of her whose devotedness made a pleasant home of his otherwise solitary study, and encouraged him in his noble work of tracing out the progress of the divine life throughout all

the mazes of theological controversy, and making church history a book of the heart, instead of the disputatious understanding. Do we need more—only conjecture the number of cases nearer at hand in which youth have been counselled and helped on through years of preparation to their calling or profession by a sacrifice that looked not to the world for motive, and asked not of the world reward for its success.

I need only name the crowning duty of brothers and sisters—the duty of being mutual helpers, for this is implied in what we have said of consideration and confidence. They whom God has so united should stand by each other in every worthy way—not selfishly exacting favors, but earnest to do good. Too often the contrary has indeed been the case, and history in most conspicuous passages, from the death of Abel and the exposure of Joseph to the wars of the Plantagenets and the feuds of the Bourbons, shows that strifes are bitterest when nearest home, and "a brother offended is indeed harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." Less conspicuous, because less monstrous, are the opposite cases, and Christianity itself leads the noble list of fraternal worthies, by presenting in its first disciples so many who carried ties of blood into bonds of faith, and strove together to the last for the kingdom that would make all brothers in God. The various forms of fraternal aid need not be specified, nor the cases described in which the death of parents or peculiar circumstances enhance the obligation, and the responsibility of parents

devolves upon the elder children. Whatever the age, the welfare of children is closely connected with their mutual conduct, and its power reaches not merely to the division of time and cares, but to the highest interests of mind and heart. Firm principle, spiritual faith, devoted purposes, act and react collaterally with great power, and in the social as in the natural world, it is the side light and warmth that most applies the cheering rays from above. Happy the home where true peace dwells between kindred, and all various gifts are held in unity of spirit! While the circle remains unbroken, it is strong against the world. When broken it is still not desolate, and the orphan is not without a helper. There is love enough on earth to join with the love that has gone heavenward to make life cheerful, and keep hope firm.

Let all apply these thoughts. Children, apply them, and be kind in all you do and say. Youth, apply them, and be thoughtful where you are often tempted to be reckless. Elders, apply them, and never allow care or worldliness to chill the better affections of early days. Deep in the heart let the old home live, and its pleasant memories, brightened by kindly offices, open ever into immortal hopes. Old things must pass away, but from the Christian they can only pass away by being all made new—new in a spirit, that remembers best when progressing most, and crowns all friendships with charity divine.

Marriage.

MARRIAGE.

It is a remarkable fact, that He who came to be the Saviour from sin, whose name is coupled with the sorrow that he would alleviate, began his public ministry at a marriage, and gave the first proof of his powers amidst its festivities. Yet why wonder at it—for where should the Gospel begin its work if not with the union that founds the family and should secure every social and moral good? How, moreover, could the genius of Christianity better show itself than by such a practical rebuke of the asceticism that scorned the social affections, and would make of life a ghostly austerity, just as if man were heavenly by being unearthly? It needs no great ingenuity to imagine our Lord's feelings, as with his kindly and majestic thought he looked upon that scene, and gave his blessing to the youth and maiden who were probably of his own kin. He saw all the serious and trying aspects of human life even in its best estate, yet none the less gave them joy upon their union.

It is well that he was at that feast. The ages since have remembered his presence, and his sacred name, heard still at the marriage, deepens its memory, and consecrates

its joy. The two ideas thus connected in fact are connected in principle, and the moralist need not in any enlightened community fear to speak of the Christian view of marriage, or care at all either for the giggling levity that sees nothing solemn in the subject, or for the sanctimonious gravity, that considers religion profaned by being made practical. There are some difficulties in the way of a frank treatment of the subject; I know our customs do not favor the homely simplicity of the language of the Bible in the discussion of marriage, and he must be very adventurous who undertakes to use the plain speech of the old divines, whether in the quaint aphorisms of Thomas Fuller or the jewelled periods of Jeremy Taylor. Yet it is not well to be very fastidious or mystify any subject by ingenious circumlocution, and we propose to say some plain words on the relation of husbands and wives in continuation of these thoughts upon home duties.

Not much need be said upon the foundation of this relation. It rests clearly upon the will of God, the best good of the parties, and the welfare of society.

As the Creator and Preserver of mankind, as the Lord of Nature and the Father of Spirits, God has made us social beings, and decreed that the most important association should be a lasting one. The natural law, which in lower creatures establishes a transient union, enacts the permanence of the higher relation, and when profoundly studied agrees with the precepts of Revelation and the results of the best experience,

God's will is clearly shown in the effect of marriage upon the moral condition of the parties themselves. It is generally essential to their true life—to the proper development of their affections and faculties. Under good Providence, it is the school of the heart, the motive to the most laudable exertion and sacrifice. There are persons indeed whose peculiar duties may exempt them from its cares,—scholars, devotees, philanthropists, who may give their whole heart to their chosen speciality, and make of science, religion or humanity their family and home. Yet these are not the general rule, and even these generally prove that the peculiar power acquired by concentrating their whole mind upon a single pursuit gives them force at the expense of breadth of culture, and may be morbid because preternatural. The monk and nun, in the convent or out of it, have done noble things, and every faithful memory must bless them for it—but not the noblest things. They have shown much mercy, yet quite as much spiritual pride. If they have fed the poor, they have framed the Mass Book and the Confessional. If they have cared for the orphan, they have also invented infant damnation and the Inquisition, insisting on hell hereafter for all not baptized by their priesthood, and devising a hell here below for all heretics against their creed. Unmarried people ruled Christendom for a thousand years, and that they did not rule in wisdom, the Bible, history, and our best modern culture all declare. Nay, the very sage of modern celibacy, Swedenborg, gave years of his life and the chief labors of his pen to prove, that the best

wisdom comes from minds united conjugially, imbuing thought with affection, and informing affection with thought, and so best interpreting the God in Christ. They who may be puzzled by his mystical lore will have no difficulty with the more practical argument, or refuse to allow that the most healthy thought and feeling, the most comprehensive culture, frequents the home which a true marriage makes.

"Marriage," says Jeremy Taylor, "is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms and fills cities and churches and heaven itself. Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labors, and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world."

To carry out the argument and show the necessity of this relation to due provision for children, to the peace and purity of society at large, would but lead us into common-places that can as well be spared. Better pass on and speak of the nature and duties of the relation in question.

It differs from the other relations that we have thus far considered, first of all in the fact, that it is elective or voluntary. The tie is one of choice, not of blood, and of

course this fact of itself speaks to reason and conscience to stir themselves in the choice, instead of leaving it to a giddy eye or a silly ear. The relation, moreover, is exclusive, and in this fact it is distinguished from all ties of blood and all other ties of choice. Again it is entire—extending to all the interests of human life. Elective, exclusive, entire, marriage is thus the most momentous of human relations. Decalogue, Gospel, Providence, experience, all declare it such, and rest upon an act of choice the only obligation that brooks no rival and allows no limitation.

In accordance with the tenderness and dignity of the relation, the ruling sentiment and correspondent duties must be. Of the sentiment, more than filial or parental love, more than brotherhood, for which friendship is an inadequate name, and which at once fascinates by natural affinities and binds with the sacredness of religion, I have no elaborate analysis to give. We escape at once the peril of maudlin sentimentality and metaphysical abstraction, by speaking of the sentiment in the practical fruits, which best show its nature.

We say first of all, that husband and wife should be true to each other—true first and last. Wo to them, if they begin their relation with a lie, either spoken or acted. They promise to love, honor and cherish each other, and they lie abominably in the sight of God and their own consciences, if they nullify the solemn promise by capricious levity or sordid selfishness. Full liberty of con-

science must be allowed for the action of various minds temperaments, circumstances, and not all dispositions are to be judged by the same degree of the moral thermometer. Yet of all diversities of gifts, this statement holds good, that marriage begins in an impious falsehood, if the parties do not regard each other with affection and respect, and do not mean to be mutual helpers. An earth-born impulse should not steal a sacred name, nor a mercenary bargain intrude its traffic into precincts more sacred than the temple courts. The sale of a human creature under the marriage ring is more degrading because more voluntary than under the auctioneer's hammer, and God will not withhold his verdict against the profanation of his altars by such outrage against nature and the Gospel.

The beginning is true, when the bond is sincerely assumed, and spirit and truth go fully together when the whole mind and heart agree in a congeniality without alloy and without misgiving.

True in the beginning, husband and wife are to be true in their progress together. Of that gross falsity against which God launches an express law of the Decalogue, and of whose curse on the offender and the victim, so many wretched lives and homes are the providential commentary, I need not speak with minuteness. Fidelity demands more than any negative policy—demands truthfulness throughout the whole relation, the confidence that will not mask its face or thought in reserve, and will deem it a fraud to confer with any third party upon any matter belonging in its nature to the two. It is the beginning of

bitter sorrow, when this limit is overstepped, and that enamel of mutual confidence is broken, which kind Heaven has given for the protection of so delicate a nerve.

Nor does truthfulness end here. It must be positive in word and in action—prompting the parties to share their thoughts and plans together, and to prove by devotion to each other's welfare the truth of what they say. We spare the digression to many satirists so attractive, and saying nothing of the cheats of married life, whether the frauds of selfishness or the wiles of overfondness, we are better pleased to leave the other aspect of the picture uppermost, and speak of God's blessing upon all who keep their truth by being true as well as kind.

We add now a second duty of married persons—one that has a very prosaic sound, touching a matter so near the springs of feeling. We say that husband and wife should be reasonable—reasonable that they may be true in fact as well as in purpose. Feeling of itself, even when healthy, is a poor guide, sadly blind without reason. Whether it go with love or indifference, folly carries misery into the home. The proverb is true enough—

> "A stone is heavy and the sand weighty,
> But a fool's wrath is heavier than both;"

and we might add, a fool's love is quite as heavy as his wrath. We speak not of the folly, which is a natural misfortune, but that of minds befooling themselves by

levity, or dissipation, or idleness. Nothing wears better than good sense, and nothing is more essential to permanent congeniality and usefulness. It is sometimes a stern censor, but only because it wishes to be an honest friend. Let married persons take it for their counsellor and it will settle for them many questions, which inflame self-will and disturb love itself. They need above all others to be reasonable, to look to reason with all its revealed lights as the interpreter of God's will to them, and of their own relation to each other. It is a great thing for them to start in life with reasonable views of the most common-place arrangements of the household. How much disappointment, and bitterness, and sin, come from unreasonable views of expense, and who will undertake to estimate the amount of domestic misery resulting from household extravagance? The dress of many a wife, and the wine account of many a husband have been the ruin of the family. Let every couple start with a fair understanding as to what they can afford to spend, and keep sacredly within the limit. If the world laughs at their simplicity, they can well afford to laugh at the world's folly, and time will be very likely to put the laugh upon the right side. Much might be said of the deplorable influence of the extravagant notions of most young women in preventing thoughtful men from taking the risks of marriage, and we hazard nothing in saying that the worst vices of cities are closely connected with the growth of feminine extravagance. America will lose her birthright and have no trace of the old domestic order, if the folly runs through the land.

and most girls are brought up to exact more expense than the average returns of industry and talent can earn.

Good sense, that honest counsellor, will save the parties from all controversy about prerogative, will interpret their peculiar jurisdictions duly; teaching the man to take the lead without magisterial assumption, to be the guardian without playing the tyrant; teaching the woman to follow his fortunes without being his slave, and to accept his deference without becoming his imbecile toy; exhibiting both in their likeness and difference, equals and not equals, so that the twain are made one by a due balance of gifts and harmony of contrasts.

Is there not need of urging with some emphasis the worth of reasonable relations between husband and wife? Are they not too ready to make a compromise of follies—the one annoyed by having her tastes and habits reviewed in the strong light of a masculine understanding—the other irritated at having his hard worldliness criticised by feminine refinement or sensibility—the two sometimes settling the difficulty by non-interference—the one left to extravagance and frivolity, if she will consent not to insist upon having her husband's time or thought—the other allowed to drudge as he will, if he will not intrude his utilitarianism into her sphere, or apply common sense to the charming follies that devour the dollars and the days. It is all wrong, and no gifts of fortune can make up for the want of thoroughly rational companionship between parties so allied, and so apt to belittle each other by triviality. Both are gainers by it, and intellectually as well as morally—

the more gainers as in generous studies of nature, art, history, society, they take a common interest in the enlarging and ennobling fields of thought, and their habitual confidence makes them educators of each other. Without being alarmed by the valiant Minervas who brandish their flashing spears from reform platforms, and declare an independence at which the old Revolutionary signers would have stood aghast, we believe that the most thorough practical discipline is to be found in this home school, and the enlargement of feminine perception and the refining of masculine vigor, would advance vastly under such a culture. There would be a better mutual understanding of the two great domains of life, and a holy alliance between the two great families of minds. In plain language, if husband and wife would advise with each other fully on all important subjects, the robust understanding would be much helped by the quick wit, and fewer foolish things, far fewer evil things would be done in the world. In phrase more ideal, yet equally true, if insight were better allied with argument—ready sensibility with executive strength—nice perception with comprehensive judgment, reason would have a new avatar on earth, and the light of God would shine as never before in its beauty and its power into each household, and over the great globe.

One more aspect of the class of duties before us now, we have to state, and one that comprises and carries out every other. They who marry are to live united in all the interests and purposes of existence.

The most obvious ground of union is the maintenance of the home and the welfare of the family. The order of Providence seems to require the one to provide by his labor or enterprise the means of livelihood, and the other to see that they are properly used. As manners are simple, and fortunes limited, the union of interests here is a very grave matter, and inefficiency or self-will on either side brings discomfort, perhaps wretchedness. As manners are refined, and luxuries abound, the same unity of minds is equally essential to give grace and true worth to the home. Let each respect the other in the several spheres, and combine to make both what they should be. Let not a man's laborious gains be squandered in folly, nor a wife's faithful care be disparaged as trivial. To use a homely word with a sacred meaning, who will not ask a blessing on good housekeeping? Is it not one of the fine as well as the useful arts—do not its very utilities like the fountain of living water sparkle into beauty? Happy they who know more of it than the tender mercies of hotels and boarding-houses reveal. They do not learn it well, unless they mingle faith with their economies, and keep the home in divine peace, as well as in worldly thrift. A home divided against itself cannot stand. Who shall keep it one save He in whom alone all souls can have the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace, and whose blessing is needed quite as much in a ducal palace as in the plainest farm-house?

How shall we urge at length this point of union, or illustrate its bearing upon all interests, plans, and hopes?

It is a great thing for two frail natures to live as one for life long. Two harps are not easily kept always in tune, and what shall we expect of two harps each of a thousand strings? What human will or wisdom cannot do, God can do, and His Providence is uniting ever more intimately, those who devoutly try to do the work of life and enjoy its goods together For them there is in store a respect and affection—a peace and power, all unknown in the hey-day of young romance. Experience intertwines their remembrances and hopes in stronger cords, and as they stand at the loom of time, one with the strong warp, the other with the finer woof, the hand of Providence weaves for them a tissue of unfading beauty and imperishable worth. A blessing on the brave and gentle spirit of the elect poet of our time, Alfred Tennyson, for speaking in his exquisite verse a truth that might too much task our prosaic analysis:—

"For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse; could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain, whose dearest bond is this
Not like to thee, but like in difference;
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breath, nor fail in childward care:
More as the double-natured Poet each:
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;

And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind."

"It is the worst clandestine marriage," said old Thomas Fuller, "when God is not invited to it, wherefore, beforehand beg his gracious assistance." Equally bad, we add, is the marriage, where His presence is not retained, and they who at first sought His blessing do not hold to it ever to keep them true and thoughtful, to lift them into a union to which the Beloved Son was not ashamed to compare His own communion with souls. Perfection on earth we may not ask, nor call a hasty word or impatient thought unpardonable. They who love much must expect to forgive something and forbear sometimes. But this may be expected and is demanded, that they who take each other's welfare in charge should never do any intentional unkindness, or fail of aught that may be done for the other's welfare. This may be expected and is demanded, that when the tie that binds them is severed by the only power that can fitly part them, and they are to part at death—they should look back with mutual blessing to the hour of their first union, be assured that through all vicissitudes and infirmities, they have tried to make each

other better and happier, and that they have learned of Him whose name at their Cana made their wedding sacred, to trust in the realm where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.

Shrink not from applying the truth now before us to ourselves. Parents, apply it, and in training your sons and daughters use good sense upon a subject so often left to utter folly. They talk and think about it enough in a a certain way, and with such poor aids as trashy novels and paltry gossip. Let them think and talk about it wisely, and let them not, if you can help it, learn wisdom at the cost of wretchedness. Respect Heaven's own laws, and do not allow the world's fashions and tyrannies to get the better of reason and conscience in controlling the most important of destinies. Husbands and wives, apply the truth—allow no routine to chill affection—no monotony to break down thoughtfulness. If the envious years should not allow you to celebrate your golden or even your silver wedding, live while you may in the wisdom which is the word of love, and the worth of it is beyond silver or gold or rubies.

Our Friends.

OUR FRIENDS.

Every important word in human language is of itself a chapter of history, and if we could read it rightly would tell us the mind of all the ages that have shaped its form, and all the individuals who have given its meaning. Starting from the beginning, every such word passes from century to century, nation to nation, and makes of itself a medium as universal as the air which forms its tones. We cannot open our mouths, in any kind or honest way, without declaring the creed of humanity, that began with man's creation, and has been enlarged or exalted by every sage and benefactor of our race. What word that is applied to men expresses this creed more than that of "friend?" From the very first, men have called each other friends, and our Saviour did not create, but developed the sense of the term, when he called his disciples friends. In the language in which Jesus was educated, the word flowed in the melody of David so true to friendship and to faith, and in the sentences of Solomon,

never forgetful in his keenest prudence of the worth of friends. In the language which the evangelists borrowed from Greece, the word had won to itself many a classic charm, and in passing from the conversations of Socrates to the gospel of Christ, it deepened its meaning without damping its joy. St. John took from his Master's lips more than Plato took from the mouth of Socrates, when that evangelist penned the words, "I have called you friends." This holy sanction has not been forgotten, nor has Christ's spirit left the word. Every age fills it anew with meaning, as the golden chalice from age to age is filled anew at the altar. Daily life and high art and letters show its power. It is breathed in many a song and hymn of home affections and fireside companionship. To what pathos it subdues the majestic muse of Milton in his lament for Lycidas—to what solemnity it lifts the wayward heart of Shelley in his elegy on Adonais—and when since the Hebrew harp that thrilled such sorrow at the death of David's friend, has there been a holier and lovelier tribute to friendship than in the offering which in our utilitarian age the genius of Tennyson has laid on the tomb of Arthur Hallam? These are great instances indeed, but they speak what all may feel. Nay, what is the secret of the power of the poet or sage, except that he can best say what comes home to us all?

Friends,—We have and must have some whom we call such. Happy are we if they can be truly so called. It is not for us to choose, whether we shall have friends at all or in any sense, but it is ours to choose, whether we

shall have them in the right sense. All people, however depraved, will have some associates whose company they to some extent enjoy, and he who cares for nobody and for whom nobody cares, may be set aside from the human family as essentially monstrous. Of monsters we are not treating, but of men, and with our common nature in view I speak now of the duties of friends.

This relation is founded in the will of God and the being of man. God has made us dependent upon each other for protection and comfort. The dependence is not limited by family ties alone, but extends to a large circle, in some measure indeed to all with whom we deal or speak. Nor is it confined to material interests. Friendship is as much a moral fact under Providence as light or gravitation is a physical fact. We like to see and talk with people for the pleasure of their society, and are unhappy when long away from those we know best. God has made this to be so in the structure of our nature, and His work as Creator has been constantly carried out by His providential care for society and all its affinities.

Our need of friends shows His designing will, and His designing will is all the clearer as this need is well supplied. In fact, we cannot be truly ourselves without society. Our thoughts and feelings cannot fully come out apart from congenial companionship. It cheers us, it quickens our powers, stirs our purposes, and the very best things that have been done in the world prove its

worth. Christ himself needed it, rejoiced in it, consecrated it. As His disciples went forth two and two to found the heavenly kingdom, the social element kept company with the religious in their own hearts, and in their creed. The divine charity which the gospel inspired, cherished personal friendships as well as general humanity. The grim hermit, in an age whose faith gloried in sacrificing companionship to piety, was glad to know that other persons like himself were in the same wilderness, and would have been frantic at the very idea of being the only person living in the world. His lonely cell was many a time lighted up by images of friends still loved.

A freer age has brought out anew the friendship of the gospel, and little as enlightened people nowadays may be inclined to put on the dress and phrases of the Quaker, there has probably never been a time when so many accepted the essential ideas which led George Fox, William Penn and their associates to reject the old names and forms, and call the Christian Church simply a society of friends. There is a kindly feeling over the world now, and much of the best hope of humanity rests upon the fact, that so many judicious and influential people of every land know each other pleasantly and wish each other well. So friendship even in this sinful world is showing God's will for us, bringing out our own faculties and fulfilling the divine plans for mankind.

The sentiment, that animates the relation, needs little definition or analysis. In some sense, all understand

it, although its best sense a true life only can teach. They are friends, who are attached to each other, with any kind of liking or loving. The attachment may begin in interest, as with parties in business or in pleasure, as with the votaries of some art or science, and as the interest or the pleasure is low or elevated, the attachment will shape its character. But however it begins, it never continues well and becomes genuine, unless the parties stand upon the same platform of principle, agree in what is highest and best, and in some way come within the scope of the Master's sense of a true friend, when he said, "I have not called you servants—I have called you friends."

Undoubtedly they are the best friends who differ much in incidental traits and agree in the essentials of character. Their likeness and their unlikeness brings them together. Their likeness makes them congenial, and their unlikeness makes them instructive and interesting to each other. Herein they follow the law of elective affinities, that runs through nature, and which makes a certain contrast essential to true harmony. Elective, yet not exclusive or entire, as the relation is, friends choose each other freely without ties of kindred blood, and however cordial the choice may be, it does not imply exclusive regard or entire union of interests. Affection, as well as esteem, enters into the sentiment, but in comparison with relations of blood and marriage, the element of esteem is generally larger in its composition than that of affection It is esteem growing into affection rather than affection growing into esteem.

Come now to the practical point of view, and consider the duties of friends for ourselves. We have and desire to have friends, those who are such in general and those who are such particularly. What are we to do to keep or make them ?

First of all we are to be sincere. Herein we must stand directly at issue with the fashionable world, that looks upon all sociability as an affair of manner, and manner as but one branch of costume—the mere dress of the tongue and eyes and looks. Let manner be respected, as it should be, yet what is it in its best estate but the simple and thoughtful expression of a gentle heart and a noble mind? It cannot be put on like a cloak, but must grow out as foliage and bloom from the life. It is so generally with manners in promiscuous society, but especially so between friends. They must be sincere alike for the sake of giving and of gaining the true goods of friendship. The heart itself thus acts happily, delighting in the free utterance of its convictions away from the world's folly and harshness. It craves a congenial sphere to breathe freely and fully. Sincere alike in his playful talk and serious conversation, a man finds his nature expanding as his life opens under genial influences refreshing as sunshine and dew. Sincerity indeed needs a grain of caution, and a thoughtful person will not tell his whole mind always. But judicious reserve need not be won at the cost of truth or by the sin of hypocrisy. Taught discretion by some experience of the ridicule or the deceit in store for garrulous frankness, a true friend will be sincere always,

yet need not feel himself called upon to open his whole heart to those unable or unwilling to give his confidence hospitality. His spirit will not be without answer. Truth will sit upon his lips and win truth for him. The true will find the true.

But not only are we to be sincere for the vast comfort and gain of free, genial companionship, but for its direct service to others. If we wish to know ourselves, we should be willing to help others know themselves by telling them the truth. Says Lord Bacon, "there is no such flatterer as a man's self, and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend." It is easy enough to get more or less than the truth regarding our failings, and friends often fret and spoil each other by a mutual retail of compliments and scandals which they make a business of collecting to be used in congratulation or condolement. What is better in view of such tale-bearing than a sincere counsellor, who at due times will tell the simple and entire truth, and above flattery and calumny will give honest advice upon faults of character and errors of conduct,—mingling kindness with caution, and never so encouraging as when thoroughly frank? This is a nice point, and one full of difficulties, yet the point is a main one, and a brave, generous heart need not fear the difficulties. No man is a true friend, who is not ready to be a faithful adviser, willing to wound self-love in its tenderest part, and give passing pain for the sake of lasting blessing. Not often and never with any assumption must he do this, but humbly as before

the searcher of hearts, and in view of the benign and majestic being who washed his disciples' feet before telling them of their defects, and opening to them the fulness of his wisdom and love.

Again, friends should be earnest as well as sincere—earnest not merely in feeling or temperament, but in the aims of life. What are we good for to others, unless we have heart ourselves for what is worthy, and are trying to be and do something for whatsoever is true, honest, pure and lovely, and of good report? A man is worth little or nothing to others unless he is earnest for worth in itself. What more frequent cause is there of the too frequent flatness of what passes for society, than the want of earnestness in its members, the prevalence of a monotonous mediocrity of thought and manner, which makes people uninteresting because they are not interested in much of any thing sensible or elevating? How much power there is in the true companionship to which each brings the zest of his own pursuit, the enthusiasm of his own favorite aim, and all are made wiser and happier by the thought and spirit of each. Part of the influence of such friendship is seen at once in cheerful looks and renewed courage. The better part is not seen, for wherever persons really in earnest meet together, no matter what their calling or topic may be, there is a power among them, that brings their heart into closer relation with the eternal heart, and whether conscious of it or not, men go away confirmed in faith—deepened, whatever their creed, in the sense that God is, and his spirit is abroad among his people.

The nobler their pursuit or their habitual aims, the greater power do friends give and take by their earnestness—the better the spirit which they bring to their personal intercourse. They are more interesting as individuals, as they are mutually interested in matters above themselves, and instructive and attractive to each other. Every honorable interest unites those who cherish it, and beautifully has Jeremy Taylor said, "He that does a base thing in zeal for his friend, burns the golden thread that ties their hearts together." Of every honorable interest the quaint old poet's saying upon honor itself holds good:—

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more.

What earnestness for every generous aim filled the heart of him who sat at the table of communion, inflamed the earthly minds around with heavenly faith and fervor, as he bade them be one with him in God, after he had said, "I have called you friends." Blessing repeated in some measure where any sincere and earnest people interchange thoughts and feelings! Blessing written on all true companionship since Jesus lived and died!

Need we add kindness to sincerity and earnestness as essentials of friendship, for is it not implied? Implied, certainly, although there is a certain kind of earnest sincerity, that lacks the tenderness which this word expresses. It expresses none other than the crowning grace of charity in its familiar application. Kindness, genuine and be-

tween persons of congenial minds, watchful to yield its balms and dews, when fortune is sharp or the world is a weariness, instant ever with a sympathy unaffected and unobtrusive in trouble and in joy—living commentary upon the sacred sentence:—

> "A faithful friend is the medicine of life,
> And they that fear the Lord shall find him."

Then griefs by being communicated are less and joys greater. "Indeed," says South, "sorrow like a stream loses itself in many channels, and joy, like a ray of the sun, reflects with a greater ardor and quickness when it rebounds upon a man from the breast of a friend."

In such kindness there will be an element of magnanimity which will check the selfish calculation that measures regard by gold, and exchanges relations of affinity for bonds of profit and loss. We will not say there is no friendship in trade, but that it is incongruous to make trade of friendship. The more the relation is one of reciprocal sentiment, and the less it is unbalanced by patronage or dependence, the more it moves in its own element and yields its own reward.

The more likely too it is to be lasting, and crown sincerity, earnestness, and kindness, with constancy. Too many things there are to break the unity of our lives, and scatter into fragments our book of experience. Yet some ties we need, and may have, that run their silken thread through its various chapters, and make a volume of the leaves else fragmentary as the Sibyl's. True friends are

such ties, and whether of our kindred or not, they can be won by friendliness and kept only by constancy. Some deemed such may fall off and become indifferent, perhaps false, but who that has any heart cannot feel happy in some form of constant kindness, and say with the Scripture and from experience:

> "A friend loveth at all times,
> And a brother is born for adversity."

Happiness indeed, when as we go through life and take its ups and downs, and look upon its ever-enlarging horizon, we can meet betimes and often some one or more whom we have known from youth, and whose very faces and voices express our best remembrances and hopes. As rising above dull etiquette, we call them by their familiar names, and say William, or Henry, or Mary, or Ellen, grim time seems to drop his inexorable scythe, and the roses that appeared withered in our path bloom out as amaranths of immortality. Power, as well as pleasure, comes from the interview, especially if, under the incentive, noble friendship gives its fascinations to wisdom, and thus stirred we review our lives closely, scrutinize our ways seriously, and our whole experience rises up under a new charm to warn us of evil and urge us to good, ready to say religiously:

> "Change not a friend for any good, by no means,
> Neither a faithful brother for the gold of Ophir."

Do we think enough of this whole subject of companion

ship—enough of it for ourselves and our children? In some way, perhaps, we may think enough of being in society, and we may have a sharp eye on our list of acquaintance, be eager enough for the silly race of ostentatious eating, drinking, and dressing, that is the life of our semi-barbarous fashion, or for the frivolous social circles, where friendship is part of the play, and they who flatter each other to the face, laugh at each other as soon as the back is turned; and in perhaps honeyed words character is depicted as sharply as if cannibals had but changed their policy, and brought their teeth to bear in a different way, not upon the flesh but upon the life. Perhaps we have a better ambition, and desire for ourselves and our children the society of the refined, and wise, and good. This is well, but one point must not be overlooked. There is no getting into really good society but by growing into it. We may win entrance to the houses and tables of distinguished people perhaps, but our real friendship with persons of sterling character must depend on our character and culture. Ask honestly—what are we, what have we made and are making of ourselves and our children? And our worth will be the precise measure of the friendship we deserve and are likely to have. Here is motive for the best culture of the mind and heart. A man's own essential character—what he thinks, knows, is, and can do,—it is this that opens to him true companionship, and by a law as universal as that of specific gravity, he rises or falls to his own level. Is it not worth a life's effort to be worthy to win and enjoy the intimate companionship of choice minds?

Do we think of this in the training of our children? Do we try to educate their social affections morally and intellectually—strive to make our houses attractive to sensible people, to give our sons distaste for profligates, and our daughters disgust for fops and fools? Are we laying the foundations of sincere and elevating relations that shall put the due check upon the evil communications that so corrupt good manners? If not, think seriously of the neglect, and do better, as you fear God and love the best in the life he has given us.

Cheerfully, gratefully, leave the subject as we consider what He has done for us, and ask His blessing on all whom we hold dear. God bless our friends! Bless them all in their widest and their inmost circle; bless all the kindly people with whom we have interchanged pleasant words, and who more than the landscape have reflected in any way his light and love; bless all who from age or wisdom have taught us truth and reverence, instructors, guardians, counsellors, pastors, on earth or gone from the earth; bless those nearer sharers of our lot, sincere, earnest, tender, constant companions, whose names are familiar at our table and sacred in our prayers; bless Him, whose gospel crowns all good will with its divine love, and calling all friends who lived in God's love, leaves to all the benediction of His parting prayer: "Holy Father! keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

Master and Servant.

MASTER AND SERVANT.

We are careful how we treat our equals—very careful how we treat our superiors. Do we think seriously enough of our treatment of inferiors? We ought to think of this, for their sake and our own—for their sake, because they are so much under our own influence; for our own sake, because we deserve just such treatment from those above us as we give to those beneath us? Do any try to escape the latter inference by denying the premises and saying that they are their own masters and ask no favors from any one? This will not do, nor will any petulant rhetoric change the solemn facts of the Divine government. We all have superiors as well as inferiors; in some points we are all masters, in some points all servants.

It is the law of God certainly, that there should be inequalities of gifts, and from these diverse gifts, whether of talent or opportunity or both, come varieties of place and influence. There is no such thing as perfect equality in the universe, except in the mathematician's calculus, or the metaphysician's theory. Neither God nor man has

ever made two things exactly alike, and the diversity that appears between two blades of grass from the same stalk, or two needles from the same mechanism, is of course greater as we rise in the scale to creatures, so various and complex in faculties and discipline as mankind. Think not, however, that this inequality favors pride on the one hand, and sycophancy on the other. The Creator has more wisely adjusted the checks and balances of his government. In some respects, he has made every man dependent upon his fellows. The greatest sage needs to learn something from the peasant, and to receive much from his toil. The king must serve the country which he professes to rule, and the best wisdom of his counsellors must serve the throne. The merest glance at society round us shows an endless gradation of varied service. The ablest lawyer is quite as much bound to devote his talents to his client's cause, as his client is bound to requite his labor. The merchant prince, creditor to many, has creditors also of his own. He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. In some sense, then, every man is a servant, and in some sense, too, every servant is a master, or in something commands.

Is not this arrangement well? The fact that it is so essential to the Divine government would prove this; but can we not see its good fruits? The difference of relation calls out the various faculties of our being, and life, like nature itself, teaches us to use our eyes and minds by looking and striving above, below, and around. If we

would bring out the skill and strength of the hand, we must lift up, as well as hold on, and so, by dealing with things high and low its muscles are pliant and strong. It is the same with all our powers, and there is no man, who is thoroughly educated or brought out, who does not obey as well as command. The motto of the Black Prince, "Ich Dien," "I serve," is written on every true man's standard, and no man is fit to rule who has not learned to obey.

Society in all ages, and especially in our own, has been testing this truth, and nothing is more obvious now than the general striving after a truer adjustment of mutual service. It haunts us at every turn. In the topic of work and wages, it is the problem of the political economist,—in the relation of people and ruler, it agitates every government on earth,—in the question of master and servant, it comes home to every family. Our position towards it now is a very simple and practical one. Carrying out our plan of treating home duties, we come now to the treatment of inferiors, especially those of our own household, or the relation of masters and servants.

We start with a clear principle, that defines at once the sentiment that belongs to this relation. Both parties have the same essential nature, and we use the term inferiors simply as denoting the fact of service, and the attendants of that fact. The servant may be, and often is, a better man than his master—sometimes a wiser one. Yet his position, in a very obvious sense, is inferior, and

whilst having privileges of his own, he is subject in his sphere of service to his master's orders. This subjection implies no surrender of moral dignity. The service should be given as from man to man, and so received; and the difference of position affects the office, and not the moral worth of the parties. Even the bond servant, according to St. Paul, is not to be deprived of his moral dignity, but is to be treated as under God a serving brother. As much as this is asserted now by the moralists of slavery, such as Dr. Thornwell and his school, who maintain that purchase does not make the buyer owner of the slave, but merely of his labor. Surely less than this position, which is so speciously assumed to justify bond-service, should not be allowed to the servant who is freely such. Let the service be what it may, and implying whatever lowliness of gifts, so long as it can be honestly rendered, it implies no degradation; and a good servant is morally to be respected as much as his master. Premising this, and remembering that whatever is said of one kind of service has a bearing upon all kinds, we are ready to look practically upon the duties of the relation.

It is most profitable for us, in addressing a community who employ so many people in their homes and business, to treat the subject chiefly as it bears upon masters or employers, although in doing this the duty of servants must needs be implied. This is implied, certainly, in the position which we lay down at starting, when we say, that it is the master's duty first of all, to have in himself

the fidelity which he requires from his servant. Here both parties meet, and are called to be trusty. The best examples and the plainest reasonings establish this ground. Does a great commander, like Washington, send an officer or soldier upon some difficult expedition, he asks of his inferior to be true to the principle which he accepts, and his whole tone and manner says, "I serve the country in my way, and so do you under my orders and in your way." Our Saviour himself cherished the very allegiance which he required of his followers; nay, he grounded its obligation upon the very nature of the Divine mind, when he bade them work, while it is day, and said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Whenever a master or employer takes lower ground than that of mutual trust, he puts himself below his servant. If he professes only to follow his own caprices, and yet asks his servant to be faithful, he exacts fidelity, whilst he cherishes caprice, and so in the moral scale takes a place below his inferior.

He thus fails of setting the true example of trustiness to his servant, and of having, by due fellow feeling, proper consideration for him. He is like the harsh creditor in the parable, who, having first been a reckless defaulter to the king, after having begged forgiveness for the enormous debt of fifteen millions, turned at once upon his poor fellow-servant, took him by the throat, and had him cast into prison for the paltry sum of about fourteen dollars. He was a treacherous man, and so could neither reasonably demand fidelity, nor have fellow feeling for honest misfortune. His lot is due to every man who repudiates his

solemn responsibility to God and his neighbor, yet insists upon utter deference from those beneath him in a capricious tyranny, which is far beneath faithful service. Every household should learn the lesson, and wherever its most favored members do not feel the solemn obligations of life, and live for objects beyond their own caprices, they are rebuked by their very exactions, and should be shamed by the very fidelity they ask. A true family will set this matter right by teaching practically, that no wealth, nor station, nor elegance, nullifies responsibility, and its daily method will prove that the doctrine of stewardship is accepted in parlor and chamber before it is preached to the basement and attic. In fact, no true man will be content with being less useful than his servants, and certainly many an affluent and high-minded master meets an amount of responsibility, and does an amount of labor, chiefly mental, perhaps, compared with which the round of domestic service is light. He is in his way trusty, and may well ask his inferiors to be so. It is this spirit only that will effectually procure the service we need, and provide domestics who will be friends instead of mere hirelings; helpers in the care of our children, instead of debasers of their speech and manners; specimens of the good servant, who, says an old author, "is one that out of a good conscience serves God in his master, and so hath the principle of obedience in himself."

Stating thus a duty common to both parties, we pass on to a second point, pressing more directly upon one of them, however, and carrying out the idea already pre-

sented. The apostle's words urge it best when he says: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." It is probably needless to urge this point here in its external sense, and insist upon giving fair wages and punctual payment. It may be important for some persons, however, who are so absorbed in their own comfort as to be almost unaware that poor people can suffer from a cause to themselves so trifling, to be reminded that, in dealing with the poor, small sums affect great interests, and that great wrong is done by overlooking the value of a few days of time or wages to people in their employ. A dollar withheld for a week from a needy seamstress, may be a greater harm than the non-payment of thousands to creditors rolling in wealth.

But there is a higher sense of just and equal due. Character is a great thing, and quite as much to servant as to master. Character in service should be sacredly respected, and it is shamefully wronged when men pass sweeping judgment upon a whole class because they have been duped by a portion, or, when in a feeble good nature, they are as tolerant of falsehood as truth, of fraud as honesty. There is, indeed, sad want of veracity and fidelity in the class most frequent in our domestic service —the class by religion and associations almost a distinct caste in our nation. There is also among them much kindness and industry—sometimes wonderful self-sacrifice, and, with all their failings, their place could not well be supplied. The greater their ignorance and obtuseness,

the more need of training them to a sense of right by setting a bounty upon good character. It is a foul wrong to commend the thievish or lazy, in order to be rid of them, or withhold due name to the faithful, in the hope of retaining their services. Certainly the ages in which loyalty was the crowning virtue have abounded in examples of devoted service, and our own anomalous and unsettled times are not without countless instances of like temper. Now, as of old, the apostle's word is remembered by many: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons."

Just to servants in appreciating their character, we are to yield them due privileges favorable to character. We shall not, then, voluntarily hurt them by their ready disposition to copy their masters' failings. We shall not then, by our white lies, give them the material which so readily turns black by a little wear. We shall not deal in inuendos and irreverence, that so easily become ribaldry and blasphemy in passing to less dainty lips, nor yield to an excess at our tables, which teaches drunkenness to coarser palates. We shall be unwilling to disturb for our dependents the quiet which we ask for ourselves on the Lord's Day; and therefore shall dispense with needless feasting or riding on that day, shunning the too frequent error of increasing our hospitality in entertaining guests by the sacrifice of the religious privileges of our servants,

and of estimating the social respectability of a church by the number of rational souls who wait at its door in companionship with horses, while lords and ladies sit or kneel on downy cushions at the altar to speak of communion with Him who is no respecter of persons, and of the utter damnation of all the unbelieving and ungodly. The good master, says Thomas Fuller, remembers the old law of the Saxon king Ina: "If a villain work on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall be free."

Nor should this regard for the character of servants end in mere negations. They should have the positive influence of a Christian temper in the family, and, when arbitrary creeds do not prevent it, they should have liberty to be present at such family devotions as may be held for the edifying of the household. So do we interpret justice in this relation in its bearing on fortune and character. Some might think our view very defective, from leaving out the element of entire social equality. If by this be meant a recognition of the moral worth of faithful servants, we make the recognition, and deem them the equals of all whom they equal in character. But, if social familiarity be the test of equality, it is answer enough that this is a matter of congeniality or elective affinity, and nothing could be more arbitrary and unjust than to force persons into a familiarity for which their education, tastes, and labors disqualify them. Such a course would comport as little with justice as with mercy.

Mercy,—rest upon that word. We have said that both parties should be trusty, and have urged justice upon the

master especially. We now add, that he should be merciful.

We are all frail and erring, and need great forbearance for ourselves. Why be unwilling to bestow it on the less favored? We all make some mistakes, and how can we expect the less intelligent to be freer from error? Why be irritated if every thing is not done precisely to our liking? They that forbear threatening may win better service by that fact, for nothing so provokes carelessness and disheartens effort, as the impatience that regards a mistake as a crime, and brands an oversight as an insult.

We ourselves are variable in health, spirits and energy, and must make allowance for the like variation in persons probably less disciplined than ourselves. We may show due consideration without fickleness, and kindness without familiarity. Cruel, indeed, is the wrong that confounds the fidelity that is struggling to do well in spite of temporary illness, with the idleness that wantonly neglects any well-known duty. Some misgivings very kind people may reasonably have in regard to servants in feeble health; and the Christian charity of a community will continue very deficient until they, who render faithful service, are cared for better in private houses or proper institutions in seasons of sickness.

Upon this subject we are apt to speak too arrogantly when we contrast our domestic manners with those of persons burdened with bond servants, and to call him as of necessity a tyrant who may be more than ourselves a pro-

tector. In our just condemnation of slavery, remember that much kindness lightens its bonds; and, remembering too, the millions of dollars in legal property which masters have relinquished, when we preach, as we may justly do, stern self-sacrifice to others, learn well that the duty of caring for inferiors has applications quite as solemn under a Northern as under a Southern sky.

It is common, I know, to talk of the ingratitude of inferiors and the thanklessness of mercy. Alas! there is enough in our own hearts to justify misgivings, and when we think how ingrate we are, we may look more with pity than bitterness upon the indifference with which so many receive favors, sometimes making their very constancy the plea of insolent demand. Nevertheless, mercy will not be without reward, and, in due season, will penetrate with its own spirit minds sadly blunted by harsh usage. Hand in hand with judgment and rectitude, it will win here below the promised blessing, and obtain its own beatitude for its giver.

Mercy,—what is it but humanity—love in its downward look, the look with which Jesus went about among men? Looking thus downward, the soul sees a verdure, and rejoices in a genial light and warmth not found in any proud star-gazing: for the best blessing of heaven is reflected upon its lowly gaze. Mercy,—he who comes short of it, comes short of his neighbor and his God. It is the ground of all devotion. The home where it dwells not, dwells without God in the world. More than can be expressed in any act, we need it; even an abiding senti-

ment, broad as our race, deep as our need. Looking upon a criminal, a blunt preacher said; "There goes John Newton, but by the grace of God." Says an old divine: "Well may masters consider how easy a transposition it had been for God to have made him to mount into the saddle that holds the stirrup, and him to sit down at the table who stands by with the trencher." Looking upon our inferior any where, let us have something at heart which says: "Friend, brother, true I am better off in this world's goods than you, but whether fortune or desert has made the difference, that fact does not decide, and, whether deserved or undeserved, my superiority teaches humility, not pride—responsibility, not arrogance."

Review now the course of meditation upon the more direct home duties. We treated of ties of nature in speaking of parents, children, brothers and sisters; of ties elective in speaking of husbands and wives, friends; and now we add the last class of elective ties, by passing from relations of equality to that of master and servant. We have cherished through these pages a degree of home feeling together, and in some points our various experiences must have accorded. Such subjects cannot be treated with any sort of fidelity, without touching some deep convictions and sacred remembrances. They have solemnity and also cheerfulness, telling of vast privileges to impress momentous duties.

Thus onward do we go,—not alone, but with companions, superiors, equals, inferiors—all giving and taking influence; if we will have it so, God with us through all

and in all. If superiors inflame ambition, let them teach respect; if equals make our enjoyment, let them move our good will; if inferiors tempt our pride, let them kindle our benevolence. We cannot cherish this spirit in vain. A kindly heart will win from the lowly many a blessing, and develope many a power. Among the thoughts that give peace to a man's dying pillow, none will be sweeter than the remembrance or image of those whose lowly condition he has bettered, and asked no reward of the world. Since Christ has lived, rich indeed has been the heavenly treasure laid up by such compassion towards those who bear the world's heavy burdens and have few of its smiles. Forgetting them, we forget our Saviour, who made their cause so his own, and we repudiate our share of His blessing upon the faithful servant!

The Divine Guest.

THE DIVINE GUEST.

The long rainy season was over, the roads once more were settled, and the happiest festival of all the year joined with the charms of Spring to draw the Hebrew people toward their sacred city. Nowhere in the whole land was there more to cheer the eye than in the beautiful town through which the festal caravans from the north were now passing on their way to the Passover. Jericho was called "the City of Palms," from the profusion of those stately trees in its fertile valley. These now added spring blossoms to their evergreen foliage; the sycamore was beginning to give cheering promise of its figs, and the balsam-tree, whose gum was worth twice its weight in silver, was showing its scanty and precious bloom in the walled gardens, whose wealth Mark Anthony gave to Cleopatra as a fit gift from a conqueror to a queen. The people were astir with the excitement of the season, as the travellers began to pour into the city. Soon word went round that the noted prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, was

approaching, with a large company about him. The wonder grew, as the report of a great miracle upon the blind Bartimeus went from mouth to mouth. The fever reached into quarters not abounding in Jewish enthusiasm, and quickened the calmer blood of the revenue officers of the Roman government. The chief of them went out to get a glimpse of the famous preacher, whom so many hailed as the long-expected Messiah. The rich publican, being a man of small stature, and, from his political relations, not likely to receive much civility from the crowd at such a time, climbed up into a sycamore fig-tree, whose spreading branches probably overhung the street. If seen at all by the populace it was with little favor, for they hated alike his connection with Rome and his lax, or, perhaps, his enlarged views of the Jewish creed. To the surprise of all as much as himself, the publican is singled out by the Messiah from among them all in the words: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide in thy house." The result of this interview is all that is said of Christ's stay in that place. The city, once an abode of kings, has passed away, and enough of its ruin only remains to allow tradition to point out in a crumbling tower and a solitary tree the publican's house and watch post. The story remains, the burden of the rude rhyme of the primer, a text for many a homily of old,—a topic for us now.

And what does it teach so much as this: that Christianity, like Christ himself, ever strives to make the spectator feel that he is seen and is followed home? Religion

at home is the lesson, religion as a check upon personal domestic failings, and the life of domestic graces.

There is force in the point of view thus presented in the change of the critic into the subject of criticism. Christianity is apt to be regarded as a public ceremonial, a holiday spectacle, associated with fair weather and large assemblies. People respect its institutions, and desire the influence of them upon themselves and their families, are glad to be impressed by any peculiar eloquence, and instructed by any peculiar wisdom. But are they ready enough to take the attitude that becomes them in view of the appeals of religion? Do they listen to the Gospel as to the voice of God speaking to them personally; and beyond the church and ministry, do they recognize the Providential power that has founded these institutions, and which condescends to act through them? Is there not sometimes a reversal of the true point of view? Instead of reverence in the sanctuary, is there not superciliousness? Are there not many, who seem never to have thought of bowing their heads in devotion, who have learned to wag them with the airs of supercilious criticism? Are there not many who are pushed up far higher in conscious elevation, than the publican's sycamore tree; who need to hear the voice of the Master speaking from his Gospel and Church, "Come down, make haste, for to-day I must abide in thy house?"

"Thy house!"—still nearer the appeal is brought by

this expression. "Thy house!" "I will go home with thee," says the Master always in his Word, and his search-warrant has never lost its power. There is something in every heart that shrinks from public gaze, and every family justly cherishes the privacy of the household. But God, if he sees us any where, sees us there, and we reverence Him, as we receive His Word as our household guest. There can be no serious faith or purpose until we come to this, and are ready to take religion nome with us. It will very likely show things in a new, and sometimes startling light. We may, perhaps, pass a tolerably creditable examination, when tested by our manner in street, or church, or general society. Sometimes the deference of good breeding may wear the look of inherent kindness, and refinement of address may seem like spirituality of character. It was a severer trial for the publican, "To-day I must abide with thee," than the mere summons to "Make haste, and come down."

It is a trial that we must all undergo the moment we begin to think seriously for ourselves; a trial, too, that cannot be shunned without losing the best blessings of life. Let the household be examined according to the standard, which we do honestly regard as reasonable and religious. What are the household gods? We have not, like the Romans, the custom of setting up images in our homes, and keeping a votive flame always burning before them. Yet the sentiment which the Roman custom expressed, we must in some way entertain. Every house-

hold has its idols, the emblems of its faith or infidelity. It has many associations peculiar to itself, and makes its own choice moreover among the associations that prevail in the neighborhood, or world, or age. It has its own Manes, or its especial remembrances of the departed ;— it has its Lares, or favorite family standards ; —it has its Penates, or its own selection from the idols or authorities of the people. These influences exist in the highest home and in the humblest—are to be traced in the old nobilities, whose caste, party, and creed, are fixed by the allegiance of a thousand years, and in the unpretending villager who thinks himself highly favored in ancient lore, as he reads in his family Bible the name and birth of his grandfather. Nor are the same influences wholly wanting to those who wish to repudiate their ancestry, the spendthrift upstarts of fortune, whose crest, manufactured to order, is but an attempt to hide the only honorable fact in the family history, that one ancestor was a plain, industrious man, with energy enough to earn by his trade the wealth that heirs squander in folly. Generally, it needs little antiquarian study to learn the ruling genius of the house. It is not only in the house of Atreus or Oedipus, or in the line of the Stuarts and the Bourbons, that family griefs have their succession, and a thread of tragedy runs through their whole history. Every family is troubled with its besetting sorrows and sins. No man is wise until he understands his own pedigree, and interprets himself, not simply as an isolated fact in the world, but as a branch of the life-tree upon which he grew. If reflection does

not inform the family of its peculiar traits, experience will not fail to make the revelation. The idle chat of the house will often exhibit the ruling spirit, and the prattle of many a lisping child betrays the idols that he has been trained to honor. Some names of folly or wisdom most frequent on the lips alike of parents and children, will be the household words that show the spirit that predominates. These names, and all attendant influences, are to be judged by their bearing on the true aims of home. Ask a few plain questions as the Master asks in the appeals of his religion.

Does content live with us, or its opposite, discontent? The question cannot be answered by any general considerations of fortune or position. Surely discontent is found in the most extreme cases, and wealth feels often very poor and limited because its desires rise with its means, and its means may be distanced far by some more successful aspirant to fortune. Discontent, ready guest of heart and home always, but never more frequent than among us with whom plenty so swells desire, and competition so quickens rivalry! With us, alas, too frequent guest, impoverishing abundance by inordinate desires, and burdening too many with cares and anxieties beyond reason and beyond strength! Often sad effect of our luxurious civilization, that in apparently the greater number of households, property brings new forms of want, and the demands of ostentation become more rapacious than the natural appetites! How many need now and always to lower their vain pride, and dignify their mediocrity or consecrate their affluence

by hearing the Master's voice "Come down: to-day I must abide in thy house."

In some especial form the spirit of discontent is apt to tempt every household, in view of some especial want, or vanity, or ambition. With it, too, come some elements of strife, or indifference, or worldliness, that need peculiar watching. Domestic life, indeed, is sacred from prying curiosity, and it argues generally little to one's credit, to be very accurately posted up in the accounts of home troubles. Without playing the part of the busybody, we may study the facts of human nature, and be aware of the developments of society. We may believe, that where several wills are brought together, they can harmonize only as they agree by appealing to a common standard; that no tempers, however pliant, can accord without mutual principle; that none in authority can govern others without first governing themselves; that a Christian spirit, earnest, kindly, devoted, is the only safeguard of the peace and elevation of the home.

What to many seems the very genius of household comfort, an easy, pleasant worldliness, is a wretched dependence, and will serve one very little in bearing up against the trials of affliction, or the dangers of prosperity. Worldliness may furnish a house, but it needs more, far more, to make a home. Too often the very spirit that prides itself upon crowding the house with magnificence, robs it of every true home grace. Whatever may be the show of hospitality, there is no good cheer for an earnest heart, nothing that returns the Christian benedic-

tion, "Peace be with this house." Too often what is called by eminence, "society," has not one truly social element. We read that some years ago, when the button-makers of England were in distress, the Court relieved them at once by directing four extra buttons to be added to the coat tails of approved mode. A refined traveller from France, Germany, or even England, might suppose that most of our city society had originated in some such benevolent purpose, and our usual style of party giving had its origin in a movement for the relief of confectioners, dancing-masters, dressmakers, and liquor dealers, so monstrous is our outlay of money in their line, and so feeble our sense of artistic beauty and conversational zest. No less a guest than he who went with the Publican is needed to give the true grace, and as Christ has been reverently and affectionately received, homes have abounded. There was far more of favor than rebuke in the offer then made, and so it has always proved, whenever and however accepted.

What is it to take the Master home with us, but to receive the most tender and intimate revelation of God's love ever granted to men,—a searching judge, an honest censor indeed, but more than this, a compassionate friend, a heavenly comforter? Receive him thus, and the whole tone of life rises. Discontent, strife, worldliness, are rebuked. The dwelling then rests upon the Rock of Ages, the light of heaven comes mingled with the sunshine, and divine nurture goes with the daily bread and the vital

air. A Supreme will being recognized, all refractory desires are checked and finally subdued into the subjection which is perfect freedom. All the while a reserve power is preparing for the emergencies that may arise. Then man proves his best dignity by adorning strength with gentleness. Then woman rises to her true power by the magic touch of that confiding faith, which ever wins divine virtue from the Master's mantle, even as for the lowly suppliant at Capernaum.

Limitation of means is borne with equanimity, and develops new energies instead of breaking down the spirits. Enlarged fortune widens the sphere of beneficence, and repeats the Publican's vow in some way: "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." New jubilee of justice and generosity would it not be, if true guidance of the households of Christendom could train desires and purposes, such as sprung up in that man's heart whilst Jesus of Nazareth dwelt in his home. We know not all that transpired in the interview between this kindly host and his Divine guest; but the conclusion leads us to believe that the conversation turned less upon the forms of ceremony and degrees of belief, than upon practical righteousness, such as appeared impressed so mightily upon the heart of Zaccheus in making his declaration of the worth of justice and mercy. How many households would at once stop their folly and extravagance, and open their eyes to the solemn realities of life, if the Divine guest were to be sought in such a spirit.

As to the precise form in which Christianity should be acknowledged in the family, we do not propose to lay down any minute, much less any arbitrary rules. The great thing is to cherish a sense of God's presence, and providence, and rule the spirit in the piety and charity which he approves. The stated recognition of his authority we urge ever, and the desirableness of regular use of the scriptures, and prayer daily in the home. If there be fear of routine and indifference, let a true purpose overcome that, and prove that the most thorough habit comports with, nay favors, the highest freedom, and the soul, like the body, is not shackled by an accustomed method of nurture. Of course, no round of ceremonials can be any substitute for living religion; and there is proof enough, that the most rigid routine of lip service may co-exist with the utmost asperity and worldliness. Tokens, alas, there are sometimes, that what passes for piety may bring no Christian graces to the dwelling; and some bigot, who mistakes hatred of the world for godliness, or some flaunting modist, who has adopted a church as a fashion, may bring churlishness or conceit in sheep's clothing into the house. These, and all such shams, make true religion more beautiful, and lend new attraction to the page which records the visit of Christ to a dwelling which the scowling Pharisee scorned, but which the love of God so richly blessed.

Then let the Master be welcome to the household. We cannot do without him. We need him to keep us in God and with one another. Let the atmosphere of the

home have the fragrance of his heavenly spirit. It was one of the trials of the early Christians, that they could not live in pagan households without being constantly pained by symbols and usages hostile to their faith. The Greek or Roman wife, if converted to the Gospel, was scandalized by the idols on the hearth-stone, and often brought to death for refusing to join in the idolatry; whilst in the camp and court, paganism was constantly thrusting its pageants upon the follower of the cross. Our modern life is not much troubled with many such tests of faith, and most of our more showy households are utterly innocent of any signs either of Christian or Pagan import in their furniture. From what is seen in some parlors, whether in books or periodicals, or in pictures or statues, we might infer the fondness of the dwellers, now for the battle or the chase; now for the shows of fashion, or the haunts of dissipation; now for the wonders of science and art; now for the shipping interest and the stock market. But too rarely does the household have a true and expressive representation of the ideas most precious to a Christian mind. An ostentatious vulgarity is too much the rule in constructing and adorning the dwelling, and a Christian taste is the exception. How many of our showy dwellings, instead of impressing a cultivated foreigner with a sense of the owner's refinement or spirituality, would only make it clear that the owner had money in plenty to spend, and knew not how to spend it wisely. Let these things be looked to. Let the economy of the household be of itself a confession of faith. Let there be something to show

that they who dwell here are God's children, and live within his kingdom. Let not gold be lavished upon unmeaning articles that show rather the capacity of expense than the capacity of meditation, or which, like the mirrors that are the chief ornament of so many houses, favor no reflection beyond that of the vanity which they multiply. If we care for art, let Christian art be not slighted, and with the landscape that portrays the beauty or grandeur of creation, let there be some expressive token that the Father has watched over men by his Providence, and blessed their homes by his Word. We are changing people, almost a nomad race. One of the oldest inhabitants of this metropolis lately remarked, that within his knowledge, not one man now keeps house in the dwelling occupied by his father. Of this fact I know nothing, yet sure it is, that we need in the frequent change of abodes, to build more deeply and securely the spiritual home, and live more among the memorials of things eternal. In the absence of ancestral homesteads with their hallowed scenes and memorials, we should seek to transmit some lasting tokens of our mind, and not make our households as evanescent in their array as the fickle breath of this world's fashions. In some way surely our best thoughts and labor should live for those who come after us, and with goods few or many, as may be, there should go some witness of truth eternal. Alike from our common nature and our peculiar vicissitudes, we need to be deeply grounded in the love of Him who came to open heavenly mansions into our earthly habitations, and to make Him our abiding guest.

Looking into the ancient books of devotion, I find this date associated with a household name, and sacred to the memory of a Christian woman, Monica, the mother of Augustine. Such thoughts of home and its best influences are well, coming to us, as they do, so fragrant with the friendly and pious affections of ages. Monica lived long enough to see her wayward boy a firm disciple at last, and after all his wanderings of thought, devoted to Christ with all the enthusiasm of his nature. How touching is that passage of his confessions in which he speaks of laying her body in the grave, and returning to his lonely home to bless her for her faithful care, and lament his blindness to her gentle pleadings. How comforting the hymn of Ambrose that rose to his mind, as if by some angel's whisper, and lifted his thoughts to the realm whither mother and son had trusted to meet in a companionship beyond parting and beyond tears. Bless this and all like remembrances in former times, or in our own experience. Praise God for all the peace and power, the loveliness and wisdom, that have entered the homes where Christ has been welcomed. Let praise continue in prayer and live in watching and good works.

First of May.

The Orphan.

THE ORPHAN.

The genial air of May comes to us all laden with the sweet breath of opening blossoms, and has a balm for the spirits as well as for the health. It stirs within us a sentiment deeper than we know how to define, revives our chilled or buried ideals, and makes every heart young again. It cannot but give something of its own tone to our thought, and we find that in all nations this month has been a continued festival in the calendar, and associated with the loveliest imagery of earth and heaven. The heathen nations, who gave the month its present name, called it so after the fairest of their goddesses, and Christians following a similar sentiment, and desirous also of enlisting every natural feeling in the service of a purer faith, transferred the honors of Maia to Mary, and in every land white flowers deck the shrines of the Madonna, and the "Hail Mary" is the burden of the matin and vesper hymn. Some of the hymns and aspirations connected with the season convey thoughts with which an earnest Protestant may sympathize, and grateful for the maternal love that has made our lives so blessed, we cannot ridicule,

although we cannot imitate the Italian devotee, who salutes the Holy Mother as the representative of God's tender mercy to man through her sex, in words of such fervor :—

"Joy of my heart! O let me pay
To thee thine own sweet month of May.

Mother! be love of thee a ray
From Heaven to show the heavenward way.

Sweet Day-Star! let thy beauty be
A light to draw my soul to thee."

May we not once more speak the name of Mary, the Blessed Mother, not to adore her as a divinity, but to win from her an illustration of our common humanity in one of its great sorrows and consolations? Cheerfully as under the returning smile of heaven, solemnly as in presence of much grief, our meditation now turns upon orphanage of the affections, as one of the facts of our homes, and upon the secondary relations which may be its solace.

Consider, first of all, the fact as one of the events of every life, sooner or later. Mary at the Cross is a representation of our common humanity in its bereavements. Every mother and every parent in some way enters into her anguish, as she saw the life of her Divine Son ebbing from those cruel wounds. She was indeed doubly bereaved,—at once childless and fatherless,—for the victim upon the Cross had been at once the son of her travail and the father of her faith, born of her into the world that

she might be born of Him into the spiritual kingdom. His own pains did not make Him insensible to her anguish, nor indifferent to the fact common to our nature, which feels itself always so void and desolate, when the being of all most loved is suddenly taken away. Tenderly He provided for her the consolation that she needed, by commending her to the disciple, whose ever present kindness would be so great a solace in itself, and so powerful a remembrance of the departed by its associations. The disciple took to his house from that hour the mother of Him upon whose bosom he had leaned.

Life is full of cases that illustrate the same principles, although not connected with facts so peculiar. It may be said indeed, that some kind of orphanage is the lot of every person, whose years are not early cut off, and whose heart is not utterly hardened against home affections. The order of nature is that children should survive their parents, and very many of us in tender childhood have learned the worth of kind and judicious parents, by being called to face the trials and cares of life without their counsel and comfort. When the case is reversed, and the parent is mourner for the child, the desolation of the heart is quite as great, and the affections, deprived of their wonted object, are, perhaps, more deeply wounded than the child's can be, even when losing the only protector in losing the parent; so strongly do the affections press downward, and so mightily does the love that sacrifices so much for offspring grow by its own exercise. Every day this bereavement strikes somewhere, and since my last word

to you, it has stricken parents whose oldest child was last Sunday present at church, and to-day is in his grave;—on Sunday I spoke to that bright boy pleasantly at our school, and on Friday said the funeral service over his coffin. Never can such a bereavement come without leaving a feeling of double orphanage, for parents in losing their offspring lose at once an instructor as well as a pupil; and surely the eldest born of a family, however young, is spiritually father or mother of much that is best in the parent's heart. Survey life in its whole compass, enlarge our own experience by observation, and we need no argument to interpret Mary's desolation at the Cross, or to learn that some form of orphanage is the common lot; nay, that before life ceases, some portion of our life is severed, when those in whose companionship we had lived are taken away. The world is full of such desolation, and there are many to whom existence is a burden, because its light has thus gone out.

But God has always some providential alleviations in store for such bereavement, and let us turn from the fact to its solace. In some form the mercy of that voice from the Cross may always be heard, "Woman, behold thy son! Disciple, behold thy mother!" The Christian church itself never practically unmerciful to its people, even in its sternest days, has always rejoiced to comfort orphanage by the solace of secondary relations; providing new protégés for the childless, new guardians for the fatherless, and new homes for the homeless. There are few

families of large experience and just feeling, where something of this same office has not been performed; and where, although other gifts may not be needed, the solace of sympathy is never withheld.

It becomes an important practical question with many, how those secondary relations shall be formed, which may in some measure take the place of the ties severed by death. Here may be children without father, or mother, or both. Here are homes that are childless either through death or by the absence of the blessing, whose absence is of itself to our nature as a bereavement. It is not well to leave the heart void, and God himself, whose Spirit moved our Saviour to commend his mother to his disciple, has provided alleviations. They who need them for themselves or seek them for others must use their best judgment and principle in the choice. There may be gross wrong or frivolous error in the selection, for there are some so desperate as to drown grief in dissipation, and others so light-minded as to lavish upon a parrot, or a dog, or a horse, the affections that belong to immortal creatures.

There are three most obvious modes of selection. The orphan finds a protector by some natural relationship, or by attracting some guardian friend, or by being placed under the care of one, who occupies by marriage the position of the parent taken away. Each of these secondary relations has been full of blessing, as also of danger and trial. Many are the cases in which a desolate child has been abused by a relative, swindled by a friend, and oppressed by a stepfather or stepmother. But not judg-

ing through plays and romances, but through life as we see it from a perhaps favored position, we have cause of much satisfaction in view of the secondary relations spoken of. How many a lonely child finds counsellors and helpers among kindred and friends, who keep alive in his heart the parent's memory by their kindness, and deepen the first relation by the second! How many desolate parents comfort themselves by comforting others; and how much grief is soothed, like Mary's, by distilling healing balm for others from its own wounds! Among the ministers of mercy, that cheer this too benighted world, none is more powerful than that which carries comfort to the suffering in the name of some departed child; and who shall number the countenances that contemplate the little ones, whose angels behold the face of our Father in Heaven, to copy their tenderness, and throw their light upon the path of the disconsolate?

Of one class of secondary relations, I cannot but say a word in justice to the subject, and in a different tone from that which usually prevails. The word stepmother has become a proverb in the language, and persons who should know better, sometimes idly speak, so as to add to its odious significance. But may not this relation be assumed in so true and devoted a spirit, and its offices be so performed, as to be great mercy to the orphan? No wonder indeed, that wretchedness comes from the misalliances that sometimes introduce a giddy trifler without ideas, or a selfish worldling without conscience, into the place that has been made sacred by a true Christian

mother now no more in the world,—when, in fact, some greedy hawk creeps into the nest of the dove, or the wanton butterfly invades the cell of the ant, or the provoking wasp steals the sweets of the honey-bee's hive. No wonder that trouble comes, when natural rivalries and jealousies are embittered by one, who is mother in name but not in feeling, one whose first joy is personal vanity, and whose least wish is to sacrifice any whim for the welfare of those now entrusted to her care. Well may the curse of Heaven rest upon such connections. Let not a shallow fancy or reckless impulse, never excusable, but least excusable in mature years, dictate a choice so sacred as that which replaces the natural parent by another. Let the choice be guided by words as sacred as those which came from the Cross, and let him, who commends his children to another's care, use his best thought and principle, as if called in this way to say, "Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!"

Whatever may be the form of the secondary relation, whether the virtual adoption be from natural relationship, from friendliness or by marriage, two obvious principles should preside over the choice, as in the example of the Cross. The secondary relation should be such as not to shame the first; and such also as to be a mutual blessing, a blessing to the orphaned and the protector. When Jesus commended his mother to his most loved disciple's care, he carried out the spirit of his own entire life, and placed her in the charge of one whose companionship would be a constant remembrance of himself.

The lessons of the former years were deepened by those that followed—the disciple was ever nearer his Master by the mother's, presence and the mother was nearer to her Son by the disciple's ministry. Happy are they whose existence, however saddened by bereavement, is not broken into incongruous or antagonistic fragments,—happy are the orphan hearts who, like that adopted mother and son, cherish throughout life the same high allegiance, and mature their first vows in their secondary obligations.

This cannot well be, unless the second principle named be observed, and due congeniality be found between the orphaned and the protector. Some choice may generally be used, and the choice should turn on the fitness of the one to guide and the other to be guided. No statement is given of the process in our Saviour's mind, that led him to make the bequest of the Cross, that legacy of love. But He knew what was in man, and knew well how much the mother and disciple were fitted for that filial companionship; the one by his deep intuitive mind fitted to enlighten her faith, and the other by her boundless affection fitted to inflame his piety and charity, to kindle his meditative wisdom into seraphic love. Let not the example be lost upon those who shrink from claiming equal sanctity. Are any of us to choose for an orphan or a half-orphan a protector, whether a guardian or an adopted parent, remember the legacy of the Cross, and in Christ's name minister to the desolate.

We have illustrated first, the fact of orphanage, and

secondly, the secondary relations that may be its alleviation. May we not add, that where the principles recommended are adopted, great blessing results to both parties concerned, the protector, and the protected. If, as the poet says,

> "An orphan's curse would drag to hell
> A spirit from on high!"

an orphan's blessing can lift to the mercy-seat of God a frail spirit of the earth. Many a time has this blessing been granted, and they who have befriended the lonely, have found a friend in God's own Providence. Is it not remarkably the case, that orphan children when judiciously and kindly counselled and cautioned, well repay all solicitude, and well appreciate, as a gratuitous offering from their protector, the care which, if from a parent, they might regard as a matter of course, hardly claiming any grateful recognition? A relation of peculiar beauty sometimes springs up, at once filial and friendly, blending in itself the affections both of companion and child. The remark applies to step-children as well as to those who are wards by adoption or guardianship. "Hence," says that gifted and fervent writer, Henry Zchokke, "not rare instances in which step-children manifest more cordial sympathy, more touching attachment towards their foster parents, than their own children. For what the latter are apt to take as matter of obligation, the former look upon as token of disinterested love and genuine goodness; and a grateful mind brings before them all the kindness and

fidelity which they received from step-parents in the years of minority. As children, they may not understand what you have given, although they may see how you gave it. But when grown up, they understand what you have done for them."

When under this form of adoption or the others specified, there is surely enough to interpret such secondary relations cheerfully, and history is full of passages, that illustrate the blessing of the legacy of the Cross. In our own experience we must in some way interpret that legacy, and find its joy or its rebuke. Do not leave the subject without touching its practical point. If such and so general is the fact of orphanage, such are the secondary relations which are providentially offered, and such is their solace when properly employed, there is a lesson from the subject, which no person can escape, a lesson as to our duty to our own children and to others. First of all, bear in mind the lonely, and strive to be comforter, and to find comforters for them. Think tenderly of the orphaned, who are in any way near your own sphere, whether from relationship, friendship, or any other association. It may not be, it is not generally money, that is most needed, but kindness, counsel, encouragement. Many an orphan boy is saved by a judicious word and timely hand from a friend of his lost father or mother, and many a lonely girl finds the path of peace and usefulness smoothed for her by those who remember the parent's image in the daughter's face. The story of Moses, the foundling of the Nile,

and of Joseph, the exile from Jacob's house, is often repeated in the lives of youths, like them in loneliness, and not wholly unlike them in subsequent energy and honor. Think of this in your homes, and make them pleasant and instructive and elevating to some guests sought by you, because you can make them happy, and who will repay your blessing better than guests of idleness or vanity, sometimes too eagerly sought, who may besot and befool your children by folly and excess. Think of it in your places of business, and seek openings of usefulness for the unprotected. Then you may hear, nay, have you not heard other voices than those of hard traffic there? then you may see, have you not seen, springs of living water gushing from the dusty pavements which you tread? Think of the orphan. For his own sake, do it, and for our own and our children's sake. The probability is, that what others ask of us we shall need for ourselves. We must expect that our children will be in want of the very sympathy which we are to show; for who can be sure of leaving his offspring mature enough in years and wisdom to demand no guardian care in place of the parental? It becomes, therefore, an imperious duty to educate our children in such a manner, as to secure them trusty friends; to give them habits of self-reliance, that shall save them from annoying others by burdensome dependence; to train them to conciliating manners, attractive conversation, elevated ideas, that shall win for them the companionship and protection of the wise and good, keep them in right paths, and mature in their new homes all the worthy seeds of old scenes and

affections. Then when the hour of our parting comes, we can think not wholly with sorrow of the legacy of the Cross; believing that they who have trusted in us, may trust in each other, or in friends divinely given, and that future years will deepen the former communion.

The great security, that this shall be so, is found where Christ placed it, in the Father. "I will not leave you comfortless,"—or orphaned, as the word is literally to be translated,—"I will come to you. Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." They that learn to live in the Father's love, are saved from the worst bereavement, and the orphanage of the earth opens to them the parentage of heaven. The first and secondary relationships of earth are both commended and consecrated by the relation prior to them both and primal of all, however late it may be understood; for in spiritual as well as earthly ties, it requires time and thought to know our truest friend; and the playmates of an hour win the child of mortality's ear more readily than the far-seeing parent, or than the Ancient of Days, the Father of all. Remember that whatever paternal wisdom or maternal tenderness we have ever known here, has its source and archetype on high. There dwells the Godhead that spoke and wrought through the victim of the Cross; there shines the wisdom that opened that disciple's vision; there burns the love that glowed in the mother's faithful heart. From the unseen, comes all the glory that is seen; and if any of us have an orphaned heart, as in some respects we all may have, let us find its solace in God, and whatever is God's.

Let the sweet breath of May, that whispers to devotees of Mary's holy maternity, fill our hearts with more than vernal promise, ideals of more than human loveliness,—call us away from all wintry chills to the light and love of the Parent above all parents—to the home that unites all homes in one.

May.

The Young Prodigal.

THE YOUNG PRODIGAL.

How marked and how various has been the response of men to the Parable of the Prodigal Son since it first came from the lips of Him whose life so exemplified its mercy. Through all those changing centuries, the home has kept its place in the affections of mankind, and that pathetic domestic picture has never failed to waken regrets and compassion. The happiest household is not without some errors that cry for forgiveness, and not many are the families whose peace is not troubled by some prodigal. The parable presents at once an example of earthly experience and a lesson of heavenly mercy. Not forgetting the heavenly lesson, we dwell now more upon the earthly example, as we speak of the prodigal in the family, especially of his fall and his recovery.

The prodigal in the family! Far more frequently than the world knows, might this epithet in truth be spoken, for it is not by any means from notorious spendthrifts and

open profligates, that wicked waste scatters the goods of a household. If a certain man who had two sons, found in one of them a prodigal under the simple manners of a rustic age, what may the father of a large family anticipate in a state of society which makes extravagance almost a necessity, and in a great city which brings the vices and follies of every far country on earth to his very door. Never perhaps since Jesus spoke, have His words found more ample illustration than in this great city, that calls thousands and tens of thousands of young men from rural homes to the fierce scramble for gold, and the feverish chase for pleasure, and which in so many ways offers to drown in dissipation the anguish of remorse.

It is not by any means always the worst boy of the family who takes the road to ruin. It may be base passion or reckless selfishness that leads him astray, but it is quite as likely to be too cordial impulses, exposing him to enticing companions, or too sanguine hopes, entailing upon him disappointment and despair. Of the many prodigals whom we have known in our own lifetime, not a few surely have been generous natures, whom it was impossible not to pity, and not hard to love. Sometimes the very temperament that makes a youth amiable, and that should make him noble, wins to him the most alluring of tempters, and he falls before some Satan who comes to him as an angel of light.

The very tenderness shown to him at home may add to his besetting weakness, by encouraging habits of self-indulgence. In fact, the parable itself allows room for

the surmise, that the younger son, from having less care put upon him than the elder, was less schooled in self-reliance, and because every thing was done for him as the pet of the family, he was in danger of doing too little for himself. Certainly indulgence may be as dangerous an extreme as sternness, and as many youths are spoiled by over fondness as are made desperate by unkindness. Sometimes both extremes unite in the same fitful temper, and children, now petted and now cursed, learn indolence and rebellion in the same perverse domestic school. Rare is the wisdom that can adjust the discipline to each temperament, and encourage without over-indulgence, and correct without harshness. Not always, however, is the fault of the child to be traced to error in the parent, for every child has powers and responsibilities of his own, and besides his own perverse will, there is a third party that frequently comes in to make mischief.

At home or abroad this tempter may come, and in forms as many as are the shapes of folly and sin. The son may not have erred simply in desiring to go from home to seek his fortunes. He may have intended to use his portion of the inheritance in a more profitable way than at home, and perhaps return to the quiet old farm-house, rich in treasure and experience, a benefactor to the whole family. Youth is full of dreams, and of not ignoble dreams, and of the thousands of young men who every month go out into the world to seek their fortune, few, if any, mean to throw their hopes away in dissipation. Young blood is ever sanguine, and fair indeed would this earth be, if it could

take the hue and shape of the youthful visions that have brooded upon its future. The very fact that a man hopes much, may throw him into a despair as intense as his hope, and the sanguine dreamer may degenerate under disappointment into the reckless prodigal. The portion of the inheritance which was to swell into affluence, being broken by some mischance, seems good for nothing but a brief round of pleasure, and is squandered in riotous living. Or the wanderer may start with the idea that expensive habits will secure to him friends and position, until he finds that these habits are his masters, and these friends go away when his money is gone. Let any sober-minded man who has consistently tried to use well his means and opportunity, remember the perils that have lurked in his own path, and he will make some due allowance for the temptations that now beset young men. We are not called to lower in the least our standard of virtue, but we are to enlarge our views to measure the extent of the danger, and to relax our severity to win the erring to repentance and amendment. Make the case our own, and as we look upon the many forms of youthful vice and folly around us, see our own youth thus come back to us, and read the sad lessons as so many chapters in the book of our own possible destiny. Such considerations, instead of making us more lax in principle, will make us more strict, by making us feel more deeply the curse of that transgression, which we thus bring home to our own thoughts Combine all the various sources of temptation, bear in mind the portions that may come severally from the youth,

his guardians and the world, and it will not appear proof of utter depravity that there should be some prodigals on earth.

The emphasis of the parable turns not upon the fall, but upon the recovery of the erring one, and the portraiture of the various steps in the recovery is so drawn to the life, as to answer with due change of manners and costume for any age. Mark its progress, in the mind of the youth and the parent, and in the final reconciliation of the two.

Mark the change in the feelings of the son. In a short time what a transition in the lot of this reckless roaming boy. His dream of fortune and pleasure has been most rudely broken, and the spendthrift is the penniless outcast. A season of famine, or what in our more commercial age would be called hard times, came on, and the pressure that bears upon all drives him to the very verge of starvation. Where are the gay mansions now that opened their doors so eagerly to the young stranger, so lavish with his wealth? Where are the boon companions that borrowed his money, and rode his horses, and drunk his wine? Where such friends are very likely to be in time of need; ready to cut the acquaintance of the wretch upon whose prosperity they have fattened and fawned. He is in a sad plight, and might have been driven to some desperate crime—to murder or to suicide, did he not learn one of the blessed lessons of God's Providence, and use misery as a stern, yet judicious schoolmaster, to lead him to remorse and penitence.

Suffering wakens him from his vain dream, and he sees things now as they are,—takes upon his shoulders the burden of his griefs,—confesses that he has abused the very generosity of his father, and is no longer worthy to be called his son. Remorse, no proof of depravity past redemption, but proof rather that conscience still lives, and is vindicating her holy law, exalted the poor outcast, even in humbling him to the dust, and lifts the wretch into the penitent, with those words, "I will arise, and go to my father."

This penitence crowns the new experience of the prodigal, and brings him into a new sphere of thought and action. He feels the power of a love that he had slighted, and which now pleads with his soul in an eloquence all the mightier from its tone of expostulation and pity. His childhood reappears to him in all its innocence and privilege,—the old homestead, with its familiar walls and trees, haunts him not as a dream, but as the one reality, and seems to eye his wretchedness with wonder and compassion. He is a changed man now, and turns his face upon the long journey homeward, not merely as an outcast hungry and miserable, but as a penitent seeking forgiveness of the kindness which he had outraged, and asking to do a servant's work on the estate whose income he had wasted.

Look to the other side of the picture, and think of what has been going on in the father's heart. No particulars are given of his feeling during the season of separation, but his heart is a chapter in the book, that life is

ever laying open, and what is told of him at the crisis, indicates well his temper during the interval. He had but two boys, and his whole hope and love must have centred in them and their destiny. They may have been dearer to him from being all the memorial left to him of the mother long since taken from the world. The younger may have been the pet of his leisure hours, whilst the elder was busy with the cares of the farm; for there is likely to be a pet child in every family. But the plain facts are enough without laying any tax upon the imagination. He had the common heart of good men, and had shown his willingness to make sacrifices for his children. Many a time in lonely hours he must have thought of the wanderer, and wondered if the boy whom he never forgot, could forget him. The prosperity of his business, the plenty of his crops, the number of his flocks and herds, could not satisfy him; even the sight of the son now with him, but reminded him how broken was his family and how divided his heart. Touches of compassion would mingle with his lonely regrets, and remembering the common weakness of our humanity, he would consider the amount of temptation in wait for every novice, and have misgivings at allowing him to go out alone into the world. Many a time his wistful gaze would rest upon the road taken by the departing wanderer, and he would ask himself if the youth would ever return, and in what condition. One day as he looked, that lonely road had for him a startling apparition. Far in the distance appears a tired, tattered wayfarer, a mere vagrant to the common gaze; but

one of the many who seem heir of misery, and for whom compassion itself has little reasonable hope. But no; the eye of affection is ever sharpsighted, and the father sees under that beggar's garb the step and air of his long-lost son; and one look tells to him the whole story of his fortunes. He is a poor and broken-down creature, and comes home penitent, to ask mercy of the love that he had so offended. All is told in those simple words of welcome "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

This was the meeting—such was the reconciliation! Full as it is of absorbing feeling, its moral element is not to be forgotten. Read its lessons, and we note first of all forgiveness of the offence in view of the penitence of the offender; secondly, restoration to favor on the ground of amendment; thirdly, justice to all parties and no injustice to the rights of the elder son, who had not wasted his patrimony, yet, who was moved to look with a jealous eye at the feasting in honor of his prodigal brother's return. Mercy is triumphant, yet justice is not slighted, and whilst the prodigal is restored to his place in his father's heart and household, all the consequences of his transgression do not cease; his portion of the substance is not as if he had wasted nothing, and he is not exempt from a long course of self-discipline and correction. Forgiveness does not end discipline, but rather begins its just action, by bringing the offender into the sphere of moral and spiritual allegiance.

Such is the story of the Prodigal Son in his fall and his recovery—a rich lesson of earthly experience and of heavenly faith. What family is there that is not called at some time, and in some measure, to apply its point to themselves?

Parents and guardians have some trials that the world knows of, and some that escape the public ear. Rare, indeed, the home that has no trace of the prodigal, and makes no demand on the heart of forgiveness. Our prevalent manners seem to set a bounty upon prodigality, and make youth, the true season of control and preparation, the ill-timed season for indulgence and extravagance. Many sons have the spending of a prince's income without the spur of a prince's ambition; and probably not a few families in our own community encourage a reckless waste that would be thought wicked in many a palace; whilst the self-will, thus pampered, is not trained to labor for any definite aim or worthy object. In homes less affluent, the case may be still worse, and the sons and daughters of persons in a medium position catch the bad ambition, and launch out into an extravagance as ruinous as it is infatuated. It is wrong—all wrong. The prodigal, in his craving for pardon, well marked the error of his course, and proved how much he had sinned against a father's purpose in intrusting him, prematurely, with such means of usefulness and honor, to be squandered in idleness and shame. Happy they who learn the lesson without such bitter experience, and who start from the first with a worthy object in view. Here is the great question that

ever presses upon us: How check the waste of talent and substance among our youth? how redeem the most susceptible years from frivolity and extravagance? There can be essentially but one answer, however various the forms of its expression. From the very first, let the young be trained to pursue some worthy object, and let the ideal of dignity be placed not in dainty indolence, but in active usefulness. Let every household cherish this creed in all its spirit and economy; let education be called perversion when it does not foster this purpose; let mercy itself when most tender and forgiving, most earnestly breathe this incentive.

Never was a young generation launched forth upon a more alluring and bewildering sea than that which now wafts its inviting breezes towards our rising youth. Opportunities thicken and dazzle as never before, and dangers multiply with opportunities; the spur is put to self-indulgence, whilst the reins of discipline are slackened, and society is starting upon an untried and adventurous track, that raises in sober minds quite as much fear as hope. But heaven is always above us, and its light need never fail us. Let the blessed Master's plea for heavenly mercy reveal to us more clearly the way of obedience, and the very tears of penitence water the root of faith and resolution. Youth, so impassioned, self-willed, sanguine,—be prodigal no more. Look to the mark placed before you by your Father in heaven, and measure your dignity by your fidelity to your work. Son—daughter—waste your heart and strength no more upon follies and sins. You

have the happiness of many in your keeping, and the Infinite Parent above will smile upon your penitence, and bless you in your fidelity.

Who can look upon the number of youths without high aims and faithful purposes, who are growing up in our cities with opportunities so unparalleled, and not find himself haunted with that ever-recurring question, "What shall we do with our sons?" A state of society that is based upon wealth as the chief good, may offer especial danger to the sons, from the very fact that it gave such incentives to the energy of the fathers, and the wealth gained in hardship may be wasted in dissipation. Some sons, indeed, catch the thrift of their laborious parents, and from love of money, or from family pride, or some better ambition, try to keep or increase their inheritance. But even these are too rarely trained to know the highest uses of property, or the true art of employing the leisure which it offers for recreations, that refresh instead of dissipating the powers. How many there are far below their level, who seem to lose every earnest motive in being free from the necessity of exertion, and who give the infection of their corrupt idleness and false honor to companions who can ill afford any dainty self-indulgence. The commercial spirit that places business energy at the top of the scale of talents and dignities, may do something to check such prodigality; but only a thoroughgoing, manly purpose, looking devoutly to God's will and the solemn work of life, can lay the axe to the root of the evil.

Consider, seriously, young man, that you have a work

to do in the world, whilst it is still called to-day. The charm of life, as well as its true honor, lies in the earnest pursuit of a worthy object. Beware of adding by your presence to the number of young men about town, who are all sail and no ballast, and whose wreck sooner or later is produced by the very surface spread to the fickle winds of passion. Balance yourself by the weight of conscious responsibility; guide yourself with a single eye to the mark of true living. Be something—a genuine reality—not an empty sham—something in power and in position, not one of the nothings who parrot the reigning follies and vices. Be yourself—yourself as God has called you to be by the gift of your powers and opportunities, instead of trying vainly to be somebody else, by affecting ways and honors never intended for you; yes, be yourself, even if your genius bids you work at the mechanic's bench or at the machinist's lathe, instead of trying to be somebody else in a profession for which you are not adapted, or in aping a lazy gentility which is a disgrace to any rational creature of God. Be thus something—be thus yourself—and you cannot be false to man or God. A true master purpose will quicken and energize the whole being. No longer a prodigal yourself, your spirit so free and devoted, so blending hearty manliness with earnest faith, will lead many a wanderer home.

Education of Daughters.

EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

"Nothing is more neglected than the education of daughters," said Fenelon, in the first sentence of his noted work on the subject. This cannot be said with truth now, when so much time, thought and money, are given to their instruction in the most opposite quarters. Whilst thinking upon this topic, it seems to me as if every one of its leading aspects had sent a representation of itself to help our judgment. This month, even the stranger in our city must have had his attention attracted by the costume and speech-making of the somewhat brave champions of the Woman's Rights' party, who have been holding their conventions; and, as if to show up one extreme by another, the debates of radicalism have run parallel with the rites of superstition; and, on his way to the hall that rings with feminine voices that claim masculine honors, he may as he passes many churches catch the strains of those vesper hymns to the Virgin Mother, by which Romanism strives to make this beautiful May confirm its daughters

in the faith, by that ideal of womanhood so deified in its own loveliness without need of any borrowed grace of man's.

In his next morning's walk, he will see in the many processions of boarding-school girls promenading with no very elastic step, quite another aspect of woman's destiny, and one that may give him mingled feelings as he meditates upon the future of American mothers and their posterity. If the stranger comes from a foreign country, he will be interested less in these three aspects of the subject, than in a fourth of far less assuming air. He will be more impressed with the looks of the daughters of the people, with cheery step on their way to the public schools, than with the champions of reform, the pupils of fashion, or the devotees of the ancient ritual. Surely the education of girls is not neglected among us; yet, whether it is wisely attended to, is one of the most serious and pressing questions of our day,—a question in which every family is vitally concerned. There are few readers who are not ready to give some thought to the true idea and method of female education.

We must look for the true idea reverently, as under religious guidance, not according to our own caprices or opinions. Nothing surely should awe our wilful conceits into docile attention, more than the effort to find the calling and the place of the being beyond all others dependent upon our care. Where but in the school of the Creator and Preserver himself, shall we learn what our

daughters are called to be under his Providence? Where but therein shall we learn to decipher that fair and wonderful hieroglyph which God himself carved out in the person of Eve, and which remains to this day the most expressive cipher of heaven's grace and care.

The language of the Psalmist, so often quoted, is sufficient to define the idea of female education when freely interpreted. If our daughters, according to his prayer, should be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace, it is clear that their education is to have accomplishment and solidity such as to fit them for their place as the main supports of social life. They are to be polished stones. Does not this expression bring the sanction of Holy Writ against the too frequent notion that woman is made only to be the servant of man, and that her chief destiny is to be the drudging underling of his will; not like the polished stone of a palace wall, but the rough rock at the foundation,—useful, indeed, but buried under the dust. This idea exists not merely in savage countries, where woman is actually man's slave, and reared to be such from childhood, so that a thoughtful mother mourns when a daughter is born; but our own Christendom reads its own darkest chapter in the condition of woman, so often forced to drudge for scanty bread and raiment, perhaps abused by the very man upon whose bidding she waits, and who dements himself in drunkenness whilst she plies her thankless tasks. In many quarters where such abominations would be condemned, views radically the same are held, and an idea of

woman's destiny prevails which takes her from her rightful place as the equal of man, which sinks her into his drudge, without time for intellectual and spiritual culture, with little of the leisure and conversation that beguile care of its sting, and toil of its weariness. Nay, how often is this destiny unconsciously entailed upon daughters by thoughtless, yet not consciously unkind, parents, who train up their girls without high aims and enlarged views, sending them into new homes so poorly endowed with commanding motives and practical knowledge, as to sink down into the dull monotony of domestic drudgery. Though the hands may not be overtasked, if the soul is weighed down to a servile routine, without sentiment or spirituality, woman is the slave of man,—the neglected rock beneath his dwelling, and not the polished stone of his home.

But this is not the chief danger now, but an opposite extreme equally degrading. The danger is not that the daughter shall lack polish, but that she will have but little else; and, instead of being a polished stone, shall be a polished vanity with no substance at all. Nothing can be more false and fatal than the notion that a daughter is to be educated for show, whilst the son is to be trained for usefulness. In her own way, the sister has quite as much strength of character as the brother has in his way, and she is cruelly treated when regarded only as a graceful toy. Sometimes this extreme meets the other, and she who in her girlhood was a dainty plaything, becomes in womanhood a plodding drudge, without a par-

ticle of worthy spirit or elevated thought to retain the love won by her beauty, or to replace the fervor lost with her youth. It is very wrong to make accomplishments the main thing in female education. Accomplishments are poor tricks, unless their polish is but the smoothness of substantial knowledge and judgment. A showy girl who can dance, sing, and prattle two or three foreign languages, without being able to speak and write sensibly in her own tongue, is one of the most lamentable of counterfeits, and may chance to blight the peace and dignity of more hearts than one by her shams. She is the product of that flashy system of training, which is doing more mischief in America than any where else, and making society a tawdry Vanity Fair instead of a companionship of hearts and homes. Not a few of our daughters seem taught to think that distinction in society is graduated by clothes and confectionery, and to measure their social honor or obscurity by their ability to follow the silly code of extravagance. If the folly were confined to those who have such affluence as craves prodigality in expense to reduce the overplus, it might be comparatively harmless, but it bears most severely upon families of limited means, where mothers and daughters are in a fever to ape the extravagance that they ought to pity. Why all this infatuated excess in dress? What do our daughters, in their tender years, need for their grace and dignity beyond the simplest costume that good taste dictates as the fit robing of girlish innocence? Even a pure French taste, which, in other respects favors such excess, teaches an

almost Christian simplicity in this respect; and the spectacle, so common with us, of school girls bedizened with costly dresses of all colors, and loaded with jewels, would be ludicrous in a Parisian drawing-room, as a walking, jingling toy-shop attached to a human creature. It is a fine remark of Fenelon in rebuking the foolish passion for dress, that if daughters were educated in a purer classic taste, and would study the beautiful in the schools of painting and sculpture, they would shun many excesses in costume on account of their deformity, as well as their extravagance. What judgment the good archbishop would have passed upon our present mode of sweeping the dusty sidewalks with costly robes of silk and velvet, we have no means of judging, for this folly seems a recent invention. What a recent French moralist, who claims to walk in the path of Fenelon, says of France, is doubly true of America: "The great care," says L'Aimé Martin, "is to please the world, rather than to resist it: the wish is to shine, to reign:—vanity, that is the end to which tender mothers do not cease to point their daughters, and upon which the world that pushes them on sees them wrecked with indifference! Vanity in accomplishments! vanity in dress! vanity in learning! This show covers all: to seem, not to be, makes the sum and substance of education." These strong words must have cost the bland French moralist some pain; but does not their strength come from their truth? Do they not apply, with fearful truth, to American society? Does not the prevalent code of feminine ostentation bear with cruel weight

upon our domestic life, making almost a social necessity of the merest conventional artificiality, and raising up a generation of listless imbeciles, who measure their social salvation by the magnitude of their exactions and the littleness of their achievements? in short, setting up a code of dignity, in which utter uselessness not seldom bears the highest honor. It would be, probably, a somewhat peculiar revelation, if the young women who go from boarding-schools into our gay society were to submit to a thorough catechizing as to what they expect to receive in the world, and what they expect to do in return. The statistics thus gathered might shed some light upon our social and political economy, and disclose a standard of empty extravagance, not very common among the titled nobility of the Old World. Away with the error upon which the whole mischief rests,—the error that our daughters are not rational creatures, and that the very strength of their character is not the best reason and rule of their accomplishment. Let them be polished stones, not tinsel, with a refinement and solidity worthy their endowments.

Associating thus the attribute of polish with that of solidity, in our idea of the education of daughters, we complete the definition by maintaining, that the two qualities should be so combined as best to fit the daughter for her providential position as the equal of man; not his rival, nor his slave, nor his toy. We claim for the daughter entire mental, moral, and religious equality with the son, yet find in the law alike of nature and revelation

a distinction between their gifts and spheres. It would be merely beating the air to argue either point,—to try to prove that woman has all the faculties of human nature, and if, in her case, they are otherwise adjusted than with man, the difference is such as to forbid boasting on either side, and to favor mutual help instead of selfish rivalry. Nor need we couch our lance against the reform school that claims for woman a masculine position, and asks to have all offices open to her ambition or zeal. We are little in danger of such extravagances, and our daughters are more likely to slight the high moral influence now within their sphere, than to hanker after the notoriety of professional life or anniversary platforms. Our current modes of society are so lenient towards those who unsex themselves on the stage, or in the ball-room, that the moralist need trouble himself very little with the loquacious sisterhood, that seems determined to have the public ear upon most exciting questions. The most discouraging thing in their prospect is in the indifference of their own sex to their appeals. Men prefer to hear women talk in a less obtrusive manner; and women seem likely to follow their time-hallowed precedent, and to have men for their orators, leaders, physicians, and preachers. The freest system will not alter the divine order, and whatever worthy reforms may come, the end will be the reconsecration of woman in her true sphere—as the equal, not the rival, of man. Hers will still be full half the world, and the best half of it too. To be the polished corner-stone in the palace which the ruling heart makes royal, is honor and

responsibility enough. To carry out this idea of the education of daughters by a just method, is a work second to none other to be done or meditated in this world.

What have we to say of such a method? Nothing but simply to appeal to God's own will as shown in the daughter's faculties and in the spheres in which she is called to move. Let the method be such as best developes her powers and fits her for her position.

How great a thing it is to understand a soul, said Theresa of Spain, in view of the young hearts committed to her care after all her own trials of faith. How great a thing it is to understand a daughter's mind in which sensibility, that demands sympathy, has so much larger a place than logic, that needs only to be reasoned out. We believe that there is sex in mind, and that the essential type of womanhood appears equally in the example of the highest culture and genius, as in the average standard. Every page shows the woman's guiding pen, no matter whether a De Staël or a Godwin ranges into the bolder realms of thought, or an Edgeworth or Hemans walks among the daily affections and cares of life. A true culture must be based upon this fact, and the mind must be trained in accordance. Little may be gained by persisting in making a dry logician of a school girl, for abstract reasoning is rarely a woman's forte, but precisely on that account, the reason must be appealed to by the living truth, which will find a ready response from perceptions so quick and intuitive as often to see at a glance what the logical understanding will with difficulty argue out.

It is a great mistake to try to train a girl to be a man in cast of mind or way of life. We can never slight the hint of nature without bringing down her retribution, and temporary success but delays the evil day. What better instance of this error have we than in the memoirs of that gifted woman so well known to most of our readers, and probably a personal friend to not a few of them, Margaret Fuller Ossoli? Her mental career is now made public property by able and congenial biographers; and who of us does not see the unconscious cruelty of the stern discipline which sought to mould her mind after the masculine standard, and which so repressed the springs of feminine power, until Providence took the noble woman into its own school, and the wife and mother learned a wisdom and a peace that classic letters and metaphysical theories never taught her; nay, far beyond the stature of the "Muse," and the "Minerva," that were once her chosen types of female dignity? Honor to her name, alike for the mistakes and the excellencies illustrated by her eventful life?

Truly trained, the girl will have as much *reason* as the boy; and hers will be more intuitive, whilst his may be more formal and severe in its *reasoning*. Strength of character will be hers, not, perhaps, so much the stern sense of justice that most marks the masculine conscience, as the full and earnest affection that adds mercy to justice and love to duty. Force of will shall be hers, not perhaps the iron will of man, but what is quite as well, and in its place better, the heroic patience that conquers evil

by enduring it. The result shall be a disciplined, sagacious intellect without masculine hardness, delicate sensibility without imbecile listlessness, active energy without moping drudgery, a combination of powers and graces that wins homage from every heart.

I would not adopt any definition of woman's powers less generous than the hint of nature and the will of God. Rather allow the largest scope to the development of every gift, and trust the feminine instinct to vindicate its own prerogative, whatever be the talent called into requisition. Marked cases show that the feminine mind may sometimes have the faculty for the severest mathematical reasoning, and England and America have been taught this fact by the philosophical achievements of women who are an honor alike to the delicacy and the intellect of their sex. Full well do I remember a visit to William Mitchell the Nantucket astronomer, years ago, when I saw that the father and the daughter had each a station and a set of instruments for taking simultaneous observations of the heavens. Since that day a gold medal from the king of Denmark has marked the daughter's triumph as the discoverer of a new comet. I am not ashamed to say, that at the time of the visit I had been several days puzzling over a difficult sum in algebra, and that, with a few touches of her pencil, the young lady made clear as day what I had but suspected, that the difficulty was in an error of the text-book. She evidently understood Arbogast's polynomial theorem better than I did.

But the great difficulty in this whole matter is not so

much in a proper definition of characteristics to be cherished, as in the application of proper motives to bring out those characteristics. With boys the motive is near at hand, for the world speaks to them with its imperious voice and bids them prepare for some specific post of profit or ambition. Without such practical spur, our sons would be a languid generation, since self-culture merely for its own sake, as an amateur pursuit without any specific object, is a dull affair, that very feebly goes. Even those young men who have had a thorough collegiate education are very apt to forget their learning, and to lose their literary gift unless they carry out the work of education in actual affairs and keep their attainments by using them. What shall take the place of such motive in the education of our daughters? What aim shall we place before them in their early studies and keep before them in after years? Serious indeed is the question, and too frivolously answered by the hosts of bright girls who go from school into a career of folly and dissipation.

There can be but one answer, and that the most Christian word. It is simply this:—"Daughter, you are under God's rule, and all your gifts and acquisitions are sacred trusts. Consecrate them by a true service. Look upon your life as folly and nothingness, until you regard it as a solemn charge and resolve to use its opportunities faithfully. Choose in the first bloom of your hope the true, the Christian standard of character, and give religion the grace and power of your youthful enthusiasm. You have

from Heaven itself a sacred commission, large as the sphere of your sex, specific as the compass and aim of your own individual talents and position." Take this ground, and it will appear that the daughter will find in her own religious susceptibility, and in the Divine grace, a motive to self-culture as efficient as the son finds in the spur of business and competition. Both indeed need the same religious discipline, but the one needs it more as an impelling, the other more as a restraining motive.

Let the motive spirit be just and fervent, it remains a question with daughters what shall be the chosen purpose of their after lives. Circumstances must in some measure influence their choice, for with a large portion, not merely taste, but the necessity of securing a livelihood, is to be consulted. But in either case the law of fitness is to be the guide; and all, without exception, make a sad mistake, who do not train themselves to some pursuit capable alike of adorning their affluence and of guarding them against need. It is very clear that there is some fatal error in the physical education of girls that needs correcting before they can be sure of any independence of position. "Very few girls that I know are well," said a lady some time ago in speaking of the large circle of scholars under her observation. As American boys are not wanting in robust health, there must be some radical error in the training of the other sex, that they are so fragile, and that they fade and languish so prematurely. It is obvious that the power of the free air, generous exercise, and wholesome hours and diet, is too little understood, whilst the confectioner's

trash often takes the place of substantial food, and the delicate nerves that the fresh breezes of heaven, the cold water of the spring, are so ready to soothe and brace with genial health, are sometimes insanely dosed with brandy or opium at caprice to an extent that might be too much for the constitution of a Goliath of Gath. There is no reason to believe that our daughters are doomed by nature to be less healthy than our sons, or less fitted for a field of usefulness congenial with their gifts. Small indeed in comparison with the field opened to sons, is the sphere at present for the talents of daughters. But small as it may seem, it has not yet been fully occupied, and it will be sure to enlarge when its capacities are faithfully tested. Certainly the saddest limitation of feminine competence comes from overdoing some few branches of labor, and there are great departments of the useful and the beautiful arts little resorted to by their skill. For ourselves, we have no fear of harming the delicacy of our daughters by opening to them any honorable field of culture or industry to which their tastes and talents call them. It is a sacred duty to employ well every faculty given by the Creator, and full and fair opportunity to develop all their gifts should be afforded. If young women wish to be lawyers, preachers, physicians, or merchants, we would put no harsher obstacle before them than our honest opinion that such is not their providential career, whilst we would do every thing in our power to throw open to their pursuit those spheres of action most congenial with their nature. In the industrial arts who shall number the

departments in which the quick perception and ready fingers and instinctive neatness of girls would fit them for success more than the other sex? Who shall limit the range of beautiful arts open to their taste and genius? What may they not do with the pen, voice, pencil and chisel? Who shall begin to unfold the future of woman as the Providential teacher of mankind? Who shall adequately measure her present power over the young? Honor to the teacher, whether with or without a mother's motive! Honor to the host of teachers who are now bearing to every border of our own land, the seeds of sound learning and social refinement. The school-mistress—not the crone whom Shenstone once painted—but the earnest, hopeful, high-minded daughter of a worthy home, is one of the ruling powers of our land, and at her approach barbarism yields and civilization reigns. I know well what I am talking about, and from years of pastoral experience I have learned to bless her work and worth.

But without dwelling more on this topic of employment, or expatiating upon the gifts of daughters for teaching in its various branches, and the demand for a higher order of teachers than are now easily found, may we not say that society among us is sadly crude and imperfect, from the inadequate culture of those especially called to be its light and joy? What art among those called beautiful or useful, can rank above the art of guiding the economy of the home, ruling its prosaic abilities so aptly, that they too shall wear an ideal expression, and the peace of God shall go with the goods his bounty hath provided?

Who shall exaggerate the worth of the conversational power so congenial with the natural eloquence of women, and so apt for want of culture or high purpose to degenerate into the poorest gossip? Who shall over-estimate the power of her who, from a full and ready mind bears to every circle the charm of an apt, sparkling, and kindly utterance, making beauty a spiritual benediction where it exists, and where beauty is denied, making up for its absence by a grace that no loveliness of feature can rival? Blessed indeed this ministry, when deep and holy faith completes the consecration, and our daughters employ for the solace of the afflicted, or the light of the benighted, the gifts and attainments which make their name so blessed among friends and in homes.

Polished corner-stones of the temple, they are then builded upon Him who is the chief corner-stone, and parents with all their solicitude for beings so tenderly framed, and so exposed to the vicissitudes of the world, may leave them in perfect faith in guardianship of a heavenly goodness that cannot fail them. Great wrong we do them, unless, by the most decided precept and example, we lead them to the Heavenly Father, through the Gospel and the Church of Him, who is the Way and the Life. What miserable folly it is that looks upon feminine piety as a weakness, coming from an understanding too feeble to doubt, or a will too infirm to be self-relying! The daughter's strength and wisdom are in her faith and love. The mind is most illuminated when most opened to the light that God sheds upon the confiding, and there is many a

house in which the wife and daughter's piety rises into a wisdom far beyond the husband and brother's hard worldly understanding. Bless God for the mission of Him whose deepest truth and inmost life were revealed to the sisters of Bethany, when hid from the Scribes and the Pharisees, and who found in their spiritual sympathy a solace which did not desert him, when his foremost disciple denied his name. It is the recipient soil, tender and watered by gentle dews, that nurtures the acorn into the oak by an alchemy that the flinty rock knows nothing of. Thus has it been with the mighty seed of the Word. What would have become of it, had there been no feminine faith and love to receive and nurture it into the tree of life? May that grace which has so worked upon the heart of woman, and raised her from bondage, and given her a new throne on earth, work among us, and redeem our daughters from the snares of the world.

Week of Religious Anniversaries.

Business and the Heart.

BUSINESS AND THE HEART.

Paul, the spiritualist and devotee, was eminently a practical man, and by what he did and what he said, gave it to be understood, that life has a serious business to be done, as well as a firm faith and hearty affections to be cherished. He himself was an efficient business man, and in his letters, preaching, and whole administration, he showed singular ability in dealing with men, and carrying his point in spite of their prejudices, or his own disadvantages. Even money matters, he did not neglect; but whilst rigidly simple and independent in his own habits, he had a wary eye upon the needs of the rising churches, insisted upon due charities and careful expenditure—nay, he expressly declared that the faculty for business was to be welcomed among the Christian gifts, and to be used for the common good, as decidedly as the faculty for teaching and exhorting. He bids men unite diligence in business with fervor of spirit, and a true service of God.

"Not slothful in business," he said at a time, when in the first love of their new faith, many were in danger of slighting practical affairs for the raptures of devotion, or in impatience for the second coming of Christ, and the age of Millennial rest. "Not slothful in business," may we not say now, great as is the temptation with many to think, that we do not need any such advice in an age and country where business seems to ride over every thing else, and trample down all fervor of spirit and service of God. Reflect a little upon the clause in its connection, and we shall see how admirably all the words go together, and fill out the sense. Interpreting them so, we will speak of the business man in and out of his business character, and especially in his character at home, or as a man of affections—at home, that place where he must show pretty thoroughly what he is at heart, to family and friends. To see what he is elsewhere, we will look at him first at his work, for his course there will decide in a great measure his spirit elsewhere. Look into his store, or study, workshop, or office, and what is he doing? Whatever it may be, it is the serious work of his life, and is taking most of his time and thought. He says to himself, however much or little he likes his occupation, "This is my business, and thus I use my faculties, and earn my livelihood, and maintain my family, and win whatever means or influence I can for objects that I approve." He is willing very honestly to accept the motto, "not slothful in business" for himself and all in his employment. Does he know how much meaning lies within those words?

Sometimes when he thinks himself a prodigy of care and industry, and in the fever of hurry and anxiety, he is almost ready to give up every holy thought and Christian feeling for the absorbing chase, is not his very turmoil the fruit of slothfulness? If he had been better disciplined, more thoughtful, more methodical, would he not have been spared all this fever of mind, and excepting, perhaps, certain peculiar emergencies, would not the care as well as the evil of each day have been sufficient for itself, and send him to his home with heart open to friendly affections, and ready to thank Heaven for sweetening the repose of his pillow by the work he has done? Surely there is no way to make business so troublesome as by neglecting it. The only way of being rid of it, is to do it well, and the most thorough and careful system is more favorable to peace and spirituality of mind than slipshod negligence. If a man does not attend to his business it will attend to him, and dog him night and day, like a baying hound in chase of a stricken deer. If a man goes beyond negligence and is dishonest, so much the worse, for the best experience says, that dishonesty is a mistake, as well as a vice—the poor resort of bunglers in trade, as well as pigmies in morals. Nothing frets, and in the end confounds a man more than to patch together a tissue of lies, and this trouble a thorough business training must shun.

The very habit of earnest attention is wholesome, and need not end where it begins. Sluggishness of mind and heart is a sad foe to all true life, and he who studies generously, and does earnestly the work of any worthy calling,

so far educates himself, and is open to all better influences by the discipline. Who of us, whatever our vocation, is not willing to take very modest views of himself in this respect? Whether in one of the learned professions, or in mercantile pursuits, have we been awake to the highest aspects of our position, and used its opportunities so well, that we may sincerely call it a liberal vocation? How many professional men there are, who are mere drudges among drugs, parchments, and ceremonials? how many merchants, may I not say, are there, who are profoundly ignorant of the history and relations of their own craft, ignorant of that wonderful science of trade which is changing the face of the world, and placing itself among the momentous facts of Providence. Consider the opportunities of a merchant to observe character, to study times, and nations; to procure the arts, books, and society best for the mind; to trace even the changes in the market to causes that connect themselves with the world's want or welfare,—then say, who is not slothful in business? Think too, of the best practical examplars of mercantile culture,—how much of those two ruling forms of practical ability, the soldier's and the statesman's, have combined in the merchant's enterprise and comprehension, and an emphasis beyond that of the market-place will attach to the words—"Not slothful in business." Nay, how can a man be thoroughly faithful to his daily calling, and use the judgment, energy, and punctuality essential to the best efficiency, without a training that looks beyond the shop or office, and introduces him into all the generous rela-

tions of life? In fact, what is business well understood, but the practical side of life in all its moral and spiritual aspects, as well as its bodily wants?

Certainly in its own way, the world is ready to require a certain kind of heartiness in practical affairs, and to regard a certain fervor of feeling as a pleasant trait in diligence. In its own way it will repeat the second clause of the apostle, and add "fervent in spirit" to "not slothful in business." The spirit of trade itself is among us very earnest, and those men are liked best by their associates, who grace practical energy by a good share of hearty fellowship and generous enthusiasm. This is well, but it is not all of the interpretation of the words. Fervor thus interpreted sometimes would be more fitly called fever, for it is more the hot haste of the blood than the genial life of the affections, more the gambler's madness than the disciple's zeal. Fervor in spirit means far less and far more than this—far less in extravagance and far more in power. It means that the cares of business should neither chill the heart with avarice, nor inflame it with passion; and that a man should be more spiritual as he becomes more practical.

Does any one wonder at this statement? Some persons indeed speak, as if the spiritual and the practical were antagonist terms. But they are quite the reverse, and eminently in alliance. Consider them on their human and their divine side. What is more practical than spirit? what more essential to efficient action? Certainly he who

acts out the most and the best spirit is the most practical man. He who is most experienced in training himself or others to practical affairs, knows very well that success comes according as spirit animates the daily routine, and each day's details grow out of a root of hearty interest. We really believe that the greatest business men have been full of spirit, and that the greatest spiritualists have been eminently practical,—the mere drudge being a faulty business man, and the mere dreamer a very poor spiritualist.

But illustrate the principle on the divine side, by considering the method of God. Does He not work by His Spirit? He has breathed it, in some measure, into all creatures, chiefly into man; and is it not the necessity of its nature to work? There is something of it in every living thing, and this something is its true life. From our abounding harvests select a grain of wheat or corn. Within that little seed lodges a power which no man fully comprehends, but which is essential to the world's life. Ask it to explain itself, and it says not a word; grind it to powder, and the dust is but dust. Keep it whole, and in the spring-time within the ground, its spirit will come out. first in the green blade, and last in the golden ears. This is always the method of God, to work from within outward; from the spirit to the work. What is the course of nature but the going forth of life from the spirit to the work, and from the work back again to the spirit, all genuine growth multiplying the vitality from which it sprung? It is what the philosopher calls the

law of ultimates, or the process from firsts to lasts and from lasts to firsts. The Gospel is its best illustration; for it put a new spirit into men, and worked itself out in new works, all its works diffusing and quickening the spirit from which they sprung. It took hold of the world practically, and made it a business to do away with old evils, and build up a kingdom more enlarged, and kindly, and pure,—more spiritual than the earth had seen before.

But how apply these thoughts to business now,—how insist upon fervor of spirit in pursuits whose aim is money-making; and, on our own principles, is not the spirit of trade itself the thing needed? We reply that money-making of itself is not the proper nor the general end of trade, but only a means to a higher end. Trade is one of the essential forms of industry, and a true man will pursue it that he may do his part well in the world, and care well for all who depend upon or who justly claim his care. Money is one step in the process, not the end, and that man is a poor creature, below even the common worldly standard, whose success, instead of fixing his thoughts on his hoards, does not fill his mind and heart with new hopes for his family and friends, and people his unromantic counting-house with hovering images of his chidren and home, visions of ampler culture and nobler charities. Leaving out of the account some miserable creatures, who heap up gold for themselves, and crush their heart under the heap, we must allow that there is much heart in trade, and the better class of business men have kindly and elevated aims in view. How much the

arts and sciences, letters, philanthropy, and religion, owe to the merchant, the whole career of commerce shows. Think of what trade has done for the higher aims of society; study the fruits of commerce in modern times; read of the Medici, the Roscoes, the Gurneys, and the noble men in our land who have endowed our best institutions, and say what you please of the miser, but say not a word against the true merchant. Justice may be his ruling virtue, but mercy is not wholly absent, since forgiveness is often called for, and no liberal merchant can be found who cannot repeat honestly the prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." There is much heart in trade, yet not enough by any means, and a cold worldliness sometimes gains ground with those worthy of better things, and, in fact, desirous of better things. Men worthy of better things become more superficial and ostentatious with time and increased means, and, instead of acting independently and sensibly, join in vain rivalry of a set of people, whose emptiness is proved every time their mouths are opened. When shall the due check be found, and the true heart abound, and the spirit be fervent indeed?

We rest our answer upon the last clause of the apostle: "Serving the Lord." It places before us distinctly the true end of life,—the service of God, and insists upon our regarding this in the choice and conduct of our business, so that it shall be a part of our religion. Does this seem chimerical? Not so; for it is surely the only

view of religion that business men will consent to call practical. They think little of mere professions, and judge of men by their doings. They make merry at the thought of trusting a man's word, because he belongs to some specified church; and they can quote too many cases of solemn persons who try to trade upon their alleged piety, who seem to think long prayers an offset to a little double dealing, and who, in more ways than one, shorten the commandments to piece out the catechism. Such judgment is well, only let it be consistent, and teach the judging party to look well to its ways, and lay hold of the substance in disgust at the mere shadow.

Here is the liberal and strict doctrine: that all of life is under God's government, and should be conformed to the order of His law and Providence. Our business is part of our life, and should bear upon its highest spiritual interest. Any principle short of this is utter worldliness, and any principle that goes further than this, and shuts religion up in creeds and forms, is bigotry and superstition. The principle comes to nothing, unless it shapes our plans, and we start and go on with the resolution not to sacrifice true life in pursuit of the means of living. It comes to nothing, unless we follow a plan which makes a business of religion, instead of a religion of business, and insists upon a daily method which will give the mind and heart its due, careful quite as much of the claims of home affections, refined tastes, and elevating thoughts, as of the price-current and the market-place. Business is full of stubborn facts, and the true service of God or religion must

be made as stubborn a fact as any of them, and keep its ground for all honesty, and purity, and kindness, and fidelity. It may be done, and the very method and energy trained in practical affairs may complete the plan of true living, and make and keep a place in the heart for home and friends, for humanity and God.

Is there not imperious call for such service,—for a decided stand in behalf of the moral and spiritual interests of our being? If men are ever so successful, how poor their success is apart from generous and Christian aims,—how poor is wealth, if it is only the means of a demoralizing extravagance, and he who began life as an industrious worker sinks into a swollen Sybarite, pampering his daughters into simpering, vaporing fashionists, and his sons into dainty, inefficient, good-for-nothing spendthrifts. How noble, on the other hand, is success, when it helps out worthy aims; and the friend of arts and letters, charity and piety, it gives peace to the soul in rendering service to God. If success do not come, and reverses follow, how essential is the stronghold of faith and peace, which will not fail to keep a man safe from the worst evil if he has faithfully kept himself within its covert. For the demands of either fortune, as well as for the good, not temporal but eternal, men are called to add to their diligence in business fervor of spirit in the service of God.

Street-preaching is, we are told, to be the order of the day, and the poor and neglected are to hear the Word

from lips before strange to them. Not only in the haunts of the miserable, and the streets narrow and wretched, is such ministry needed. Many a street, stately with warehouses and banks, needs more than any thing a voice that can reach the heart, and enlist the chiefs of business in a service better than luxury and worldliness. No revival is more demanded than the conversion of the votaries of wealth, not to some new creed or mannerism, but to a true and godly way of life. In some way this must be done, and God must have the sagacity and force for his own cause which are so often in bondage to the world. His spirit must breathe new life along the great arteries of trade, and make men better without making them less strong, multiplying the examples of characters like Gurney the banker, devout and charitable without ceasing to be shrewd, or, like Peel the statesman, using the comprehensive judgment, learned in practical business, for the welfare of his country and the glory of God. We need and must have a new order of men, and of their coming many bright signs appear,—men at once practical and spiritual, knowing well the world and its ways; not to be its servants, but to subdue its fierce forces into obedience to the kingdom not of this world. There are dreamers enough, and drudges enough. The want is of men with eyes wide open, and hearts quick and true. In no age more than ours has the deep need and earnest hope of society better interpreted the apostle's definition of a truly practical man, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

God himself seems to stoop from heaven and show the worth of this character, in showing in himself the grand archetype of the practical mind. Nearer he comes, and reveals in all-powers and laws, in the light, and air, and rain, in tree and rock, in earth and man, the working of his mind. He tells us anew, that he made the world, and that we find out the wisdom of his work, as we learn to do our work wisely. With him the useful goes with the lovely and the spiritual. Every dew-drop or sunbeam does a mighty business for him, and shows his loveliness and illustrates his service as it cheers the landscapes and helps the harvest. With reverence be it spoken, yet with all confidence: the God in whose image we are made is the eternal exemplar of the practical mind. In Christ we are followers of him when we do all our work earnestly, spiritually, faithfully, under his government; and open within our business a door into all the home affections and friendly graces of the earth,—all the sweet charities and blessed hopes of heaven.

Let not the thought lose itself in generalities. Our business men are strong and earnest in many things, and are probably as enterprising and efficient as any set of men in the world. Merchants, do you hold precious your written obligations? What of the unwritten? What would your credit be if you slighted your business promises as you often slight your Christian obligations, and treated the world as you treat the moral and spiritual interests of your home and church? Think seriously and do better. In spirit and in truth as well as in energy, be "followers of God as dear children."

Your pursuits train you to calculation; despise not the word, but keep it, and weigh it well. It is a noble word, and the calculus is one line of the Divine reason. God calculates,—he geometrizes—he seeks due proportion, and number, and weight,—he counts time, and the round of the seasons; and the paths of the planets point the days, even the seconds, on the dial-plate of the heavens, and prove the punctuality of God. Calculate well and as he does. The good Samaritan calculated when he took care of the wounded man, and the priest calculated as he left him by the road-side. Howard calculated when he gathered the statistics of philanthropy, and Arnold calculated when he sold his country for gold and ambition. Judas calculated when he betrayed his Master for the pieces of silver, and Jesus calculated when he asked, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Among the great facts of our welfare, place the mind and heart, home affections, heavenward thoughts, and our business will have new blessings from Him whom we serve.

Summer in the Country.

SUMMER IN THE COUNTRY.

That was a beautiful and expressive ordinance of the Old Dispensation which enjoined a rural festival upon the conscience of the faithful. Every year the whole nation were ordered to pass a week in rural bowers woven of the boughs of goodly trees, in remembrance of the time when their fathers dwelt in the wilderness, and God led them to the Land of Promise. By the Israelites, the ancient festival is still remembered, and one of the most gifted of their modern writers thus describes its observance in Southern Europe.

"Large branches of the palm and cedar, the willow, acacia and the oak, cut so as to prevent their withering for the seven days, formed the walls of the tent; their leaves intermingling overhead so as to form a shelter, and yet permit the beautiful blue of the heavens to peep within. Flowers of every shade and scent formed a bordering within, and bouquets, richly and tastefully arranged, placed in vases, filled with scented earth, hung from the branches forming the roof. Fruit, too, was there,—the

purple grape, the ripe, red orange, the paler lemon, the lime, the pomegranate, the citron."

This festival in its ancient form, Christians do not observe, although we may see some of its traces in the camp-meetings of Methodism and in the evergreen boughs of Catholicism. Yet its essential idea should, and does remain. Each year we are sadly dull and worldly, if the luxuriance of summer does not lift our thoughts to Him who sustained our fathers in their hard conflict with rude nature, and enabled them to change the savage wilderness into fertile fields, and peaceful groves. Grovelling indeed we are, if, upon our return from the pleasant retreats where we have sought rest and recreation, we cannot bring back some grateful remembrances of what we have seen and enjoyed in rural places.

The old festival, kept as it was by the whole nation at Jerusalem, in green tents, was a kind of annual consecration of the relation between the city and the country. Thus the feast had at once a special and an universal meaning. The bigot may have thought only of the years of wandering, when, in nomad tents, the chosen race escaped from their oppressors. But more enlarged and sensitive minds, of the race of David and Isaiah, interpreted the season far more generously; and we are assured by the presence of Him who went from Nazareth to take part in the scene, that some eyes looked upon those rural tabernacles which stood among the streets of Jerusalem, as emblems of the permanent relations which man should sustain to nature,—of the constant ministry of the works of God to man.

Our topic now is the relation between the town and the country, especially the power of rural life upon them who dwell in cities.

We consider first the various objects which present themselves for contemplation. Cowper's contrast may have been too strong, when he said that "God made the country, and man made the town," for, in both places, we are surrounded by the works of God and man. The farm, as well as the busy street, shows what human toil can do, and they that live in cities are in themselves, and in the plenty that sustains them, constant proofs of the bounty of God; whilst upon all places the sunshine and the rain do fall with equal mercy. Yet, in the country, we see more of nature in its divine adaptations, less perverted by the artifices of man. The eye is not limited by streets and walls to some narrow spot, nor is the landscape curtailed of its breadth and beauty to suit the grasping policy of traffic. Generally the hand of rural art and labor rather interprets than obscures the plan of nature. The regions well cultivated are often the most picturesque, and at once charm by their scenery, and instruct by their varied uses and adaptations. We see man in just relations towards the soil as its cultivator, and towards the animal world as their master and friend. He lives in close sympathy with the heavens, the earth, the animated tribes. The sun in its rise, and course, and setting, counts to him the hours, and divides his times of labor and repose. He breathes the air as the Creator

mingled it, and draws from the soil something of that quickening, vital force, which the great Mother never refuses to her children, who seek her. He enlarges the circle of his friendships more widely even than in metropolitan coteries, and has friends among birds and fowls; while, with the sheep, and horse, and ox, as well as with kindly neighbors, he can keep company. He is daily called to see the harmonious plan of the universe, the co-operation between light, and air, and rain, and dew, between all elements and all creatures in the universe of God. In fact, apart from any philosophical curiosity, the very necessity of his calling must make him not a little a sage in the observation of nature. When science is added to observation, the greater, of course, the privilege of his position, the more readily does he unlock the treasures around him, and his rural hours may be hours of favored vision, nay, of sacred communion.

But is not man the crown of nature? and where is man to be found in such perfection, as in the great centres where men congregate? If we would be wise, why not seek the great multitude and dwell most among the crowd? I will not disparage city life as a school of instruction in the science of human nature. He who knows nothing of the great market-places, and social resorts of his race, is ignorant certainly of our nature under very important aspects. But to be constantly mingling with men, is a very different thing from the true knowledge of man. The judicious analysis of a few characters will teach more wisdom than a superficial observation of ten thousand

passers by, just as the dissection of a plant or an animal shows more of its structure than a glance at a whole kingdom or continent frequented by the same tribes. Human nature may be wisely studied wherever it is to be found, and if extent, as well as sharpness of observation is essential, we must remember that all men do not live in cities; that the country has its own forms of humanity; and moreover, that they who dwell among the great crowd, learn best in more quiet scenes to judge of the true meaning of the bustling life around them; and they that are wisest in their views of the busy town, are they who have been able to survey its characters and circumstances frequently, from the commanding elevation and distance of rural retirement.

Men and their arts, indeed, appear in utmost number and force in cities; but without the constant reinforcements from the country, the tribute of fresh energy and enterprise, the products of mechanical ingenuity, and of agricultural labor, the metropolis would soon languish, deprived at once of its daily bread, and its best intellectual resources. Even the beautiful arts, which adorn the homes and halls of cities, appeal to an eye and taste that ought to be well schooled in the observation of nature, and the canvas can never reveal its best meaning to minds conversant only with crowded streets and busy marts. If we must go to the city to see the gathered treasures of rural labor and skill, we must go to the country to learn to comprehend the affluence of the city, to understand the secret of its wealth, and to interpret the wonders of its useful and beautiful arts.

Surely, then, we cannot but recognize the worth of the country in respect to the objects which it presents. Its beauty, although in some measure expressive of the work of man's hand, is most eloquent with the glory of God. Its plainest utilities bloom into loveliness, and to a devout ear sing out in anthems. Its wealth speaks less of man's arrogance than of heaven's bounty. We might institute in this respect a comparison between the pursuits of men in town and country. They are in both situations toiling for gain, and in both cases more or less in competition with men, and in contact with natural laws. But in the country, men depend less upon shrewd bargaining, and far more upon the direct return of their labor in the products of the soil. They deal more directly with their Creator, and there is more constancy and security, if not so much excitement of hope and fear in their gains. Refreshing and instructive it is for those whose business habits lead them to look upon the chances of traffic as the source of wealth, to learn for themselves how much stronger security the Creator has given for the sustenance of man; and important as are finance and traffic, the best treasures of man come from the soil in return for his skill and industry. Surely the pursuits most habitual in rural life teach many a sober lesson to men fevered with the competitions of traffic. We might show also that the country may afford quite as valuable hints in the simplicity of its pleasures, as in the sobriety of its industry. They who are in the habit of regarding enjoyment as the result of some costly dissipation, need

to learn of nature a stern, yet blessed lesson, and find that true happiness is not a far-fetched luxury, but is very near us, when we live near to God, and true to his laws. Wretched are they who make of their seasons of recreation but a new round of dissipation, and repeat the orgies of the winter in the retreats of the summer!

It is often asked whether life in the town or the country is, on the whole, most favorable to the formation of character,—the pursuit of true wisdom, virtue, happiness. Without being obliged to take either side of the question, it is sufficient at present to urge the importance of guarding against the peculiar exposures of each condition; and especially, of urging people of the town to look well to the sins that beset them, and seek in the broad fields truths that they need in their own homes.

They live in the midst of excitement and need sobriety. If they have more intensity, they have also more fever of mind, and may take counsel wisely of those whose temper is more serene, if, perhaps, sometimes more sluggish, and whose habits are likely to be more equable, if in danger of becoming sometimes monotonous. We absolutely need the influence of rural life to soothe our spirits and calm our nerves. The pulse itself abates its fevered beat, and the heart is quieted down into harmony with the gentler pulse of nature. If the town offers stimulus to the visitor from the country, the country repays the gift by giving calmness, and thus the power of new energy to the visitor from the city.

A serene frame of body and mind is certainly one requisite of wisdom, and not the only requisite which rural life favors. We need to look beyond the horizon of fashion and conventionality, which we are so apt to mistake for the entire world, and correct our observations by careful notes of those forms of rural life, which, after all our city pride, we must regard as most expressive of the common lot of man in all nations and ages. The man who sums up all his views of rural manners in the contemptuous word *countrified*, will do well to remember that there is not a little reason to form a more contemptuous word in reference to such persons as himself, and call the fop, who mistakes his circle of loiterers for the human race, and his haunts of folly for the world of wisdom, as sillier than the simplest rustic, farther from the true mark in being *citified* than the latter in being *countrified*. They that dwell in crowds very easily become very knowing, but not necessarily wise. They that frequent the haunts of vice and frivolity learn many things that do but add to their folly. They do not view life in its best aspects and true aims, nor interpret it as its Divine Author teaches. Even those whose minds are open to the true science of humanity, need to flee from the crowd to ponder soberly upon its lessons. In the busy world, they are constantly finding seeds of thought, but in a far less troubled soil these seeds must be nurtured and matured. Probably the wisest meditations upon man, society, Providence, have been engaged in by persons well taught indeed in the ways of the great world, but ruminating in

quiet upon its teachings, and correcting the prejudices of the hour by the sober reasonings of calmer scenes and influences. To such truthful judgment of distant things surveyed from its serener retreats, rural life adds a wisdom peculiarly its own,—a wisdom such as Solomon so sagaciously incorporated in his proverbs, and Jesus so divinely presented in his parables.

It would not be difficult to show the happy influence of familiarity with the country in teaching lessons of virtue—in bracing the frame for hardier labors—in urging the worth of the lesser ethics of frugality and economy, and the higher morals of true manliness and godliness. Virtue is moral strength, and is taught in every school that strengthens the moral energies. The genial air and simple habits of rural life favor manly fortitude, and a manly spirit. Poor would be the future prospects of our nation if they rested wholly with the dwarfed and fevered offspring of our cities. Our people would ere long lose their place among the nations, and would drop their heads in shame in comparison with men trained in hardy sports and healthful labors, as the yeomanry and gentry of England. Religion itself, which is the crown of true manliness, would languish if there were no more check to vice and skepticism than the check, strong indeed as it is, which metropolitan churches afford. How wonderfully the power of faith among the peasants of La Vendee withstood the sneers and threats of Paris, with its armed bands of Atheists in the great convulsion, when priests became scoffers and churches were places of rioting! How nobly

our own churches have been favored by the words and thoughts of elect minds devoted to God and his truth, in peaceful villages away from the crowded marts! Where would the pulpit find the teachers that are needed, if its sole dependence were upon the youth reared in cities? I could not but think much of the power of rural life in raising up vigorous and independent preachers, whilst I was enjoying a few weeks of recreation in the lovely town in which President Dwight prepared himself for his more conspicuous ministry at New Haven. I have rambled with delight again and again over that noble Greenfield Hill, which he celebrated in a poem, and have not wondered that the vast and charming prospect, ranging as it does from the broad waters of Long Island Sound to the peak of the Catskill Mountains, should have made something of a poet of a theologian, sometimes so remorseless a logician. May we not see, moreover, in his theological works, and still more in the pages of his mighty predecessor in theology, Edwards, of Northampton, who, too, dwelt among scenes of singular beauty, ample proofs that nature never deserts her votaries, nor fails to breathe into them a spirit of beauty, that can live, after the harsh dogmas have perished like the husks that inclose the grain for the harvest.

I would not disparage our town life, nor call it by any means godless. It is happy in being able to command so many resources, happy in being able to ally to itself so many influences not its own. Where there are souls there God may be known, and where learning and experience

gather their treasures, we may find light upon the ways of God and his Providence. But very poorly do we study this manifold creation, and the word of its Creator, if we limit our horizon to the streets and walls, and business and pleasure even of the greatest metropolis. The Bible itself—that book so full of the poetry of nature—from its first to its last chapter, from the Old Eden to the New Jerusalem exhaling the fragrance of fields and breathing the genial air of rivers and mountains,—lifting the soul to God by the contemplation of his works,—the Bible is a sealed book to us, if we do not always read its parallel revelation in the heavens and upon the earth. There is an expression in nature which must be caught, like that on a friend's countenance, from itself. Description is not enough, and the best scientific analysis, however valuable as an aid, is but a poor substitute for the original reality. God speaks to us still in his works, and what prophets and bards of old have heard, we may now hear. We may hear it perhaps all the more eagerly for the comparative rarity of the privilege. They that are trained in cities wisely yearn to breathe the country air, and in its diviner meaning, interpret the landscape. Pastoral poets and rural philosophers find their fondest admirers in such minds. Who has exercised this blessed ministry of the interpretation of nature better than Wordsworth, poet and philosopher at once as he is? With all their exquisite refinement, and their sometimes mystical sentiment, his poems are tinted with the hues of sky and mountain, lake and meadow, eloquent with the voices of the seasons, breathing the

calm spirit of nature in its pleadings with the rebel temper of man. In how many of us they awaken blessed remembrances of our childhood, refresh us in our worn, anxious, and weary life as with the gush of living waters, and the sight of grassy meadows! Kind Heaven would not have us lose the companionship of nature, and has given us elect minds as well as glorious scenery to be its intepretation. There is peace as well as power in listening to such ministries. Nor do I fear to place upon this list, those men who have brought a fine taste and genial humanity to the culture and adornment of the soil, the improvement of rural architecture and landscape gardening! What name deserves more grateful mention than that of Downing, that lover of nature and of the art that best interprets her ideal. I know of no village which does not bear directly or indirectly some mark of his mind, in the form of a cottage or school-house, or a garden devised after his idea. He has brought out the wealth of our forests, and in our summer retreat, many a tree that else had been cramped and hidden in the swamp has whispered his requiem to our ears.

The course of thought which I have pursued regarding the objects and influences of country life, will find an answer in many of my city readers. We need no tent of green branches to quicken our remembrance of Heaven's bounty to us and our fathers in our relations to rural scenes. Our memory has a leafy arbor of unfading foliage, in which we may every day celebrate God's goodness to us in the gift of so noble a heritage, where we dwell and where we may visit.

It is not well to conclude these thoughts upon the influence of scenes upon character without urging home the truth, that our ruling principle is the main index and source of character; and he is sadly deluded who trusts to any position to secure his virtue or to excuse his vices. Apt enough we are to be discontented with our lot, and to burden fate or Providence with the blame that is our own. We imagine some more favored condition to be the sure warranty of success and worth. He who lives among the crowd ascribes to their example his vices, and he who lives among the fields refers his rudeness to want of better opportunity. Older than the Satire of Horace on human discontent is the wish of man for change of fortune, even as old as man himself. Better for him to make the best of what he has, and find his content thus keeping pace with his progress.

He that dwells in the country, while he should use every opportunity for enlarging his circle of experience by travel, must take heed lest he slight the privileges of his own position. He may fall into the vices of the town among the simpler habits of his neighbors, and be eaten at heart by the worst passion while breathing the purest airs of heaven. He must learn simple truth of a power above man, or nature will not save him from corruption.

He who lives in the city need not ascribe the evil that he suffers solely to circumstances, nor expect mental enlargement as the consequence of a cosmopolitan home. He must keep true simplicity in the midst of artificial conventions, and may narrow himself into an earthworm in

the midst of the men and the culture of all climes and nations. He may be in bondage to a metropolitan mannerism which is quite as slavish as any provincial prejudice, and full as far short of a wise humanity as of a genuine faith.

Better counsel do we need than crowds can teach or nature alone can unfold. Wherever we dwell, we are to look to a kingdom not of this world, and by communion with its sovereign Head, elect Messiah and sainted intellects, we are to confirm what is best on earth by what is most gracious on high.

Still, though only in thought, need we weave our green bowers to tell us of the ancient march through the wilderness to the promised land, for still are we on our pilgrimage. Wisely do we keep the feast of tabernacles when we erect them at once in our remembrance and hope, looking upon the emblems of God's love for us in the past as the assurance of his love when the soul shall reach the river whose waters never fail, and rest beneath the tree of life whose leaf never fades, whose fruit never withers.

August.

Returning Home.

RETURNING HOME.

Two commands God gave in the beginning and is always giving to his creatures. He bids them go forth and return, and the lives of all beings are divided between the two. The history of every man is but another version of the words, "He went forth and he returned." All his enterprises and all his results may be thus simply described.

It is so common, especially in our restless time, to dwell upon the more adventurous change, that the milder is apt to be slighted, and, bent upon advancing, we make too little account of return as a primal law of life. How can we fail to see it written on all things that God has made? It may be read upon every dew-drop whose summons back to the heavens the morning sunshine brings, and upon every flower whose gorgeous petals signal its triumph, and herald the retreat of its vital forces to the earth whence they came. Every rising wave murmurs also of an ebbing tide, and every beat of the pulse sends back as well as forward the current of life. The heavens—they

bear majestic witness of Him who rules their hosts. The stars are ever returning upon their courses, and marking the seasons that time the periods of man. Insect, bird, and beast, follow instinctively the same great law; by their transformations, migrations and quickened or diminished vitality, they turn in the recurrent cycles in which all things have their round. In all ages, thinking minds have been impressed with this great fact. We see the impression in the early memorials of sober thought. The wise preacher brooded over it, as he spoke of winds and waters returning on their path and of there being nothing new under the sun. It haunted the visions of the sages of the Nile, and stands out to the eye in that serpent symbol which teaches from tombs and temples the circle of eternity.

Feeling themselves sometimes swept away upon this great current of events, inclosed in this serpent-fold of destiny, men have lost their proper sense of responsibility and sunk down into a passive fatalism. From this torpor God would ever arouse us, and have us see in the return, as in the going forth, the same providential plan—the same sphere of duty and privilege.

How full of privilege is this recurrent aspect of things! Led by the hosts of heaven, the seasons walk their benign round, and in their course they are ever renewing most delightful relations of life. In the calendar of nature there are far more festivals than fasts, and, to a well-taught mind, the recurrence of the sadder

times and scenes of the year brings thoughts more blessed than the world's reckless feasting. Spring and summer are always new and always cheering, whilst autumn and winter teach lessons and may nurture affections more precious than their gayer treasures. The text of nature has ever a marginal commentary taken from the book of the heart; and as the text is read and re-read, the commentary grows in size and interest, for each year's repeated interviews reveal nature and the heart more fully to each other, and give variety ever fresh to a friendship constant as the law of God. The great universe was made, we must believe, more for the home of rational souls than for the playground of giant masses and powers of matter. What aspect of its vastness is more tender than that which exhibits its majestic changes as waiting upon the discipline and affections of God's children; the great sun lighting the laborer to his work, and then withdrawing its light to send him to the welcome of his home and the peace of his pillow; the whole starry host joining together to make and mark the days and months whose returning recalls some pleasant face of life and Providence, makes childhood glad, or age peaceful.

Man himself has in his own being a periodicity corresponding with the cycles of nature. His active energies, his sensibilities, social and devout, his intellectual powers, have their recurrent periods. He is strangely ignorant of his own nature, who has not learned that there are times and tides within his own soul as well as with seas and stars. The plan of the benign Deity for him seems

to be such as to secure at once constancy, and variety, and progress.

Note well the constancy which God, the Ever Faithful and True, ordains for man by the recurrent order of his lot. He will not have life a chaos of scattered fragments, nor a stray meteor that follows no orbit. It must have its periods of outgoing and return. Whatever be our home, the object of our love or care, to that we must ever recur; and however capricious the humors, or eventful the career, every man's life falls into a certain circuit, and every heart revolves in some orbit by a law as sure as that which guides Arcturus and Orion. Man, indeed, may be so perverse as to abuse the law, but he cannot repeal it. He may give his heart to evil, and make his home with wickedness; but wherever he makes it, there this law finds him, and, in a round of habit good or bad, returns him after every wandering to his own place. Securing thus the constancy of his Providence, God teaches us to see the moral significance of the law of return. What a lesson is here upon the force of habit! Its power comes from God's own constancy, and woe to the man who inverts his nature so sadly, that evil instead of good walks in the appointed circuit. Every vice into which he falls constantly returns upon him, like the circling waters of the whirlpool, which run round and round until lost in the dark deep. Every good which he loves, every truth he accepts, every charity he cherishes, follows the same law; circling in the ascending order, like the vine

that twines round and round its trellis, to lift its leaves and fruit into the upper air and light. The law of habit we cannot repeal, but our use of it depends upon ourselves. It is like the tides, which wait not our bidding to rise or fall, but which leave us free to launch wisdom and industry, or folly and rapine, upon their waters. The law says that man must return in his course. He must go home. Let a true life interpret the benignity of this Divine constancy.

Consider, also, the variety which comes from the action of this law. The interest of existence depends in great measure upon a due proportion of constancy and variety. Were there no uniformity, the world would be chaos, society Babel, and thought madness; there could be no external stability, no intellectual consistency; the senses would recognize no familiar things, and memory could make no reliable record. Such a condition is hardly conceivable; although feuds and wars sometimes so disturb the stability of life as to give some idea of the fatal effect of such disorder. Without variety, moreover, the Divine plan would also be broken, and a dreary monotony would brood over paradise itself. Benign Heaven has blended the two elements in our lot, so that perhaps our highest pleasure consists in the return of familiar blessings with varied circumstances;—not in absolute novelty or absolute permanence, but in scenes, friends, and pursuits ever constant and ever new. Who does not know this kindly mingling of joys? What traveller is there in

distant lands—lands which his boyish fancy has so long yearned to see—who does not feel more delight in the return than in the going away? No matter what beauties or sublimities of nature and art may have feasted sense and soul, the fairest sight is his own familiar home and friends,—the sublimest thought is of the God who guarded his childhood, and whose presence he feels more deeply as the guardian of his dwelling, than as the dread Being who piled up the Alps and poured out the oceans. In any aspect of the case, it is recurrence with variety that gives our being much of its finest zest. To talk with cherished friends after absence, to revisit familiar scenes and meditate on times past and present; to perform, under new influences and encouragements, the accustomed round of duty; how much of freshest satisfaction is thus found! It is the best novelty and the truest constancy. Old things are made new by the fresh spirit infused into them, and that which the apostle states as the feeling of a first convert to the Gospel, becomes a permanent aspect of life,—"Old things are passed away, and all things are become new."

Happy the man who understands self-discipline, so as to secure this charm, and mingle constancy and variety in his pursuits. He will divide days and years in such a way that life shall be ever more constant and more fresh. No servile drudge to worldly care, no capricious pleasure-seeker who is always uneasy, because always sated, he will be a faithful worker and a cheerful friend, stronger for work by recreation, the wiser for enjoyment by his

work,—filling his time with such varied uses, that recurrent duties shall be welcome to him each in its time, and every day's life illustrate in some way the varied uniformity of God's plan for nature and humanity. Great obstacles, we know, lie in the way of such order; for care is often too imperious and protracted, and pleasure too engrossing, to make true method easy; but the obstacles yield before a just purpose, and, in the end, every man is the artificer of his habits. He can make his life constant to its appointed round, and varied in its constancy.

So God teaches us the moral significance of the law of return, by showing its bearing on the stability and freshness that give charm to our days. Yet more, he teaches us to find in it the true law of progress. He bids us return, but not the same, nor to the same,—he bids us return better or worse, and to a state of things better or worse. This is a necessity, and we are called to make it a happy necessity. Not in a circle of absolute uniformity, but in a rounding path, in a spiral course, we wind our way upward or downward,—our way turning indeed ever upon itself, yet at a higher or lower mark. The very structure of language indicates that true progress is the returning of the mind towards its previous experience. What is the accumulation of knowledge but remembering the facts of previous observation? What is wisdom but the fruit of reflection, or turning thought backward upon its course? What is repentance but conscience revising past errors? What is reformation but the whole man

returning to himself and to God? It is progress that gives its most cheering aspect to the recurrent order of life.

Return then to thine own home as each day, or week, or season repeats the decree. Return to do better than you have ever done,—to see more clearly than before the demands of your position, the errors of your way of living, your indifference, perhaps unkindness, towards those who daily look to you for a nurture, better than that of perishing bread. Return to thine own house, and consider whether among the guests there welcomed, the only abiding Comforter is entertained, and the good angels that go with him are not shut out. Return with thought more free to see things as they are from your temporary absence from the trammels of routine, with affections fresh from nearer companionship with nature, with powers renewed for the sober work of life. Let fortune smile or frown more than of old, make sure of your own soul, and do better than you have done.

Constant and varied in many respects our life must be. God bids us add progress to the constancy and variety that he has decreed. True to him, our days in their returning order, their various events, their steady progress, shall go forward, like the march of the faithful host to the promised land, their step responsive, their way opening new attractions, their course ever onward, and above them, swelling sweet and clear, that glorious psalm of jubilee, which in its rhythmic verse and progressive flow ever returns upon the same rapturous bur-

den, and repeats the hallowed anthem, "His mercy endureth for ever."

Let this be our spirit, and we shall know how wonderfully God reconciles two things apparently contradictory; we shall know, that the greater our progress, the surer our return,—that more and more the blessed scenes and friends of early days shall come back to us. Memory shall mate with hope to cheer us, and the evening of life shall add to its own tranquil beauty the fairest charms from the morning of our days. The aged man turns ever fondly to his childhood, and may enter the kingdom of heaven like a little child, even before death unlocks its gates of eternity.

What a thought here opens—opens to us as we return to our homes, and think of some who return no more! Beyond these homes, the orbit of our being reaches, and one, nay, many call to us, "Come." Over the grave the decree is still more solemnly heard. The words, "Thou sayest, return, ye children of men," mean more, far, than "dust to dust." "Return, ye children of men." "Dust to the dust whence it was,—the spirit to God who gave it."

Christ repeats the call in more than the Hebrew's faith, in more, far more than the philosopher's hope. Futurity as revealed by him is the way homeward to Him from whom our being came,—to all the faithful and lovely, who have blessed man and glorified God. We will not scorn the philosopher's hope of earthly cycles recurring in progressive order, until our globe bears the perfected

harvest of a truer civilization, and all nature comes to herself. This hope is well, but does not go far enough. As we and those dear to us leave the earth, we crave word of a return more blessed than any dream of earthly kingdoms and ages. We crave what God has given us. The soul about to go into a region by itself unexplored, yearns to know that the path is not to night and nothingness, but is a return and more than a return to God, the Eternal Father, and to the mansions that gather from all earthly homes their purest treasures, and transfigure them in the light of heaven.

September.

The Church in the House.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

In his letter to Philemon St. Paul salutes "the church in thy house," and thus brings home to us a fact which is too often put a great way off. He brings the church into the house, and thus makes an every-day reality of an institution, which is thought to belong to the disputed territory where controversialists quarrel, or the close walls where priestcraft rules. The church, what is it? many are virtually ready to ask. Is it a certain style of edifice, or platform of opinion, or set of ceremonies or band of officials? In the apostle's mind, surely it was a very tangible fact, and he closes his letter so full of friendly remembrance and delicate courtesy with an affectionate message to the church in his correspondent's house. He meant, of course, by the church the Christian people under Philemon's roof, whether those who lived there constantly or those who came to worship occasionally. The same greeting is several times repeated in Paul's letters, and fitly guides us in some thoughts on practising Chris-

tianity at home, or the Church in the House. We would show that—

There should be a church in every house,
What makes it a true church in itself,
And how it may be true to the church universal.

There should be a church in every house. Nay, we might indeed say, that there must be one there, unless the people are heathen or infidels. A church is a society of Christians for Christian purposes, and it is not easy to see how any worthy family can fail to answer to this large definition, if they will only think of it. Is not the compact which united the heads of the family to each other, and pledged them to their children, a Christian compact, expressly sanctioned by religion, as well as by civil law? Can the compact be kept in any tolerable sense without Christian influences, and is it not expected as a matter of course, that every house shall possess those standards of faith and practice, those Scriptures, which set forth Christ as Saviour and mark his people as his own? Is not all that is done in piety and charity within the household, as far as it goes, a ministration of Christianity? We certainly might justly take offence, if it were said of us, that the apostle's salutation could have no sort of application to our home, on the ground, that there is nothing distinctively Christian there. In all proper humility, consider how we have been educated, what books, what teachers we have enjoyed, what influences we have won from the great thoughts and great institutions of Christendom, what

convictions we have tried to cherish amidst all our cares and changes;—consider these things, and would it be right to say that there is nothing Christian at home, nothing of the church there? Some families may indeed seem to be very worldly, almost godless; yet even they are likely to have among them, however unworthily, some traces of Christian institutions, and within their desecrated roof the Bible with its glad tidings, and memory with its treasured wisdom, and conscience with undying witness, still speak of God and Christ, and so far the place is holy ground.

If thus in some sense there must be something of the church in every household not utterly depraved, is it not well to give importance to the fact, that what must be in *some* way should be in the right way? Many men have been Christians without knowing it, and many families have been churches without thinking of it. All simple, unconscious goodness is to be honored; but it is not so frequent as to make conscious effort dangerous, nor will the most beautiful and spontaneous piety lose any of its grace by opening its eyes fully to what is to be done. Let the spheres of our life be distinctly seen, and the affections will be all the freer and fresher for the clear vision. Let it be distinctly seen, that they who live in one household, by that fact stand in close relations to each other, and have a faith to cherish and a work to do. Let it be seen, that the family was the oldest church holding its worship before temples were built or priesthoods formed, and that the true temple and the true priesthood,

instead of repealing, do but consecrate anew the patriarchal church, and Moses and Jesus both give new power and beauty to the covenant with Abraham and the individual family.

Let there be a church then in every house. We now add, let it be a true one. What makes it such, do any ask? The apostle's benediction is a sufficient reply. To the church in thy house, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace! these are the true consecration of the household. Grace, bringing into all souls the riches of God's favor, and winning them to him through a heavenly faith,—peace, drawing all hearts into unity, and harmonizing all labors by one ruling love. Grace—this comprises all that Jesus came to give to men, all the divine life that he would impart. Its source is God's own Spirit, his wisdom, his power, his mercy—and there is no way of defining it so good as the simple gospel way. Consider what was in Jesus, and what he gave to those that trusted in him, such a sense of God's being and goodness, such life of the soul, such assurance of a divine kingdom both present and future, such consecration of all faculties by one comprehensive faith,—consider this, and we best discern what grace is, and how it gives vigor and beauty to the household as to the individual. Its source is in God, but it is to be received by the soul's own will, and to open the soul to its influence has been the great effort of all worthy theologies, creeds, worship, ministers. We would

not disparage any of them, while we do plead earnestly for the importance of the church in the house, with its own peculiar means of grace, its affections so demanding to be confirmed by a love that is divine, its pleasures so readily opening the soul to gratitude, its sacrifices so full of blessing when devoutly rendered, its labors so rich in the fruits of the Spirit when springing from a root of faith, its vicissitudes so eloquent in providential lessons, its memories so full of caution, its hopes so thirsting for immortality. God surely has opened in our homes precious means of grace, and blessed are they who by prayer uttered or unuttered—by devout trust spoken or unspoken, use these means sacredly as in the church of Christ! A transforming spirit will be at work there, and will transfigure all its experience by a divine light, and consecrate all its various gifts and faculties by a divine power.

And in its train peace will come—not merely the quiet that checks harsh words, and regulates tumultuous cares; but the interior peace that tranquillizes each mind without breaking down its force, and harmonizes all diversities of talent and temperament without mutilating any nature. Peace, as the corresponding Greek word teaches, is that which binds together, and who needs this more than those whom God would bind together? It is a great thing to have it, and it was a great triumph of Christianity to give it. In some respects it was a greater triumph to win to living unity the various tempers of the primitive Christian families, than it was to subdue the empire of the Cæsars into one confession of faith,—greater cer-

tainly, inasmuch for various tempers to agree in all the numberless points of daily contact is more than to agree in the one point of a nominal belief. Paul, in defining the economy of the true church, began by declaring, that there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. Blessed in many respects has been the comment of history upon that word of inspiration! Who that has any sense of God's use of providential men, does not adore the wisdom that has employed such various minds for the same great purposes, and made history such a book of Providence, telling us of the wise and good and mighty characters of insight or argument, learning or eloquence, sensibility or daring, who have done their part to build up the kingdom of God? The church is truer as this is better done, and all differences of power combine in one work. Carry out this idea at home, and what a sphere for that peace of God which would harmonize all diversities by one good spirit!

In a worldly point of view shrewd men study the characters of their families with something of this aim, and desire to see what their children are best fitted to do, that they may choose such callings as shall bring out their powers best for the wealth or dignity of the household. This desire we are not quarrelling with, but enforcing a higher study of character that seeks to look more deeply into the mind, and provide far more thoroughly for the great work of life. Do not by any means fail to discern the mathematician, the orator, the mechanic, the artist, the farmer, or whatever else may be the varieties of talent in your

family. But discern also the various faculties and dispositions in a religious point of view, that each may be duly guided, and all led to use their various gifts in the true heart. See the tendencies that need to be checked, and above all, those that need to be encouraged; and home education will be a Christian nurture in the peace that passeth understanding. Far more bountifully than many a kind-hearted but too worldly parent thinks, has Providence enriched the house with gifts that may be ministries. That boy whose restless impulse seems sometimes wilfulness, needs your discriminate care to win his impulse to a noble enthusiasm, and may be a reprobate if your neglect leaves him to his passions or your violence stings him to retaliation. That girl so keenly alive to what is pleasant to the eye and ear, may make of her native taste a motive to every vanity, unless you train the sense of beauty into reverence for the true loveliness and for the art that copies the handiwork of God and makes life beautiful in making it holy. That keen little reasoner who vexes you with so many strange questions, the doubting Thomas of your fold, may be the chilling sceptic, unless he is encouraged to be the thoughtful sage who can answer as well as ask. That sensitive child who is so awake to religious impressions, whose choice reading is hymns and Bible stories, and whose dreams upon the pillow seem often to be in the sweet land of Beulah which so cheered Bunyan's Pilgrim, may by your neglect become a morbid bigot, unless by your judicious sympathy she is encouraged to become a healthful devotee,

cheering and exalting the home by that interior life that made Mary of Bethany love to sit at the feet of Jesus, which filled with such holy quietude the heart of Jane Guyon, and moved with such persuasive mercy the lips of Elizabeth Gurney and Mary Ware.

We need not specify the varieties of character that require to be subdued or encouraged to the same spirit. Blessed is the home where such peace is found, and all are bound together in its unity! No cunning arts of mental training, no formal systems new or old, no technical dogmas, no mechanical ceremonials, much less can any cold worldly policy do this work. Grace and peace must be sought from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and our thoughts, and studies, and labors quite as much as our prayers, must rest upon the rock of faith, and look to the blessing from above. Such grace and peace at once give strength to the utilities and beauty to the courtesies of the house, ruling its economy in a divine order, and refining its manners by a tender humanity. There may be various creeds and forms in the habits of the various members, yet all are harmonized by one faith and charity.

Such in brief is the true church in the house, and being such, instead of petting any narrow familism it will best favor the church universal by appreciating its office and helping its work.

It will appreciate its office, for what can better interpret the meaning of Christian institutions than a faithful

use of the social sphere, first of all in time and importance? As we try to be wise and faithful in matters nearest to us, how can we but cherish the wisdom kept by the church for ages, and the sacred usages which appeal so tenderly to our home feelings? How can we fail to honor the exposition of the Divine Word, the lessons of public worship, and those various ministrations that take such hold upon life as it is, whether to consecrate childhood into the privileges of the Divine kingdom, to implore upon human love the Divine blessing, to comfort the mourning, to rejoice with the happy, to strengthen the dying with an immortal hope, or set forth the Resurrection and the Life above the dust of the grave? For the sinful and the lonely, indeed, the church universal has a tender and solemn voice, but it is not for them alone. The city of God on earth which Jesus founded, has its best offices for those who live together in the unity of the Spirit, and the church in the house is a better interpreter of its riches of wisdom and joy than any conclave of ghostly monks or assembly of keen scholastics.

Where such appreciation is found, true help will not be wanting. Helpers to the church will go forth from the household, well trained to further the various offices of general piety and charity. Every true family will take due account of its own numbers, means, and gifts, to give its just share of co-operation in every good word and work. Care for the poor, light for the benighted, counsel for the young, strength to the wavering—all will be duly given, and even the accomplishments that with the worldling

are means of giddy dissipation, or vain show, with the Christian will be means of edification and comfort, so that winning manners shall win souls to God, and voices tuned to melody shall breathe a harmony not of this world, and give to the songs of Zion all the beauty of holiness. The spirit of antiquated error shall feel the wholesome renovation, and the fresh life of the church in the house shall go out into theological schools and conventicles, purging away old superstitions and carrying every where the catholicity of practical wisdom, wholesome sensibilities, and earnest good-will. Thus it is that in the later ages fountains of new power have been opened, and pure, genial home principles and affections have done more than Luther's theses or John Knox's sermons to drive monkery and all its brood of spectral charms and horrors from the church visible, and the prospect of the church invisible, and thoroughly to reform the creeds of men touching earth and heaven and hell. The end is not yet, and a truer, more earnest and affectionate Christianity is to carry out the great reformation and bring on a truer catholicity than the world has ever seen.

Thus we meditate upon the church in the house, its necessity, its true character, its help to the church universal. The topic is itself its own personal application. The great point is this, that at home we are to live as members of a spiritual kingdom, and strive to infuse the spirit and carry the order of that kingdom into the feelings and habits of the household. Take this thought

seriously to heart, cherish it in meditation and prayer, how can it remain idle? By paths seen and unseen, the heavenly grace earnestly sought, will enter into the economy of the family, and save its peace from the war of hostile tempers and the inroads of a domineering world. Wise, and kindly, and devout habits will be formed, which make religion at once a spirit and a law, free without being wilful, orderly without being mechanical, like the waters of Siloa that flowed sparkling in that regular channel so framed by God from rock, and made sweet will of their obedience to Him who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand.

Such a household will have influences and associations peculiar to itself. The sons will be manly and tender; the daughters will be gentle and strong: parents and children in their mutual affections shall bring out the finer harmonies of human life, that show God's goodness even more deeply than the chants of the psalmist's choirs. As changes come, and the years pass, treasured remembrances shall fill the home with images sacred as the tablets and pictures of ancient chapels, and hopes more living than monumental marble can record in solemn church-yards, shall proclaim the resurrection and the life over the dead; the absent ones of the family will in thought always, and, when they can, in person, make reverent pilgrimage to the old hearth-stone; and they who die of that family, wherever they close their eyes, will have in the cherished ministrations of that church in the house the mightiest of all proofs of the eternal home. The house made with hands opens into

the eternal spheres, and its own life repeats Christ's assurance of heavenly mansions. It will have a ministry seen and a ministry unseen, one seen in gentle charities, the other known by unseen influences.

"Uttered not, yet comprehended
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from those lips of air.

The Haunted House.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

Haman ought to have been happy. If wealth and honor could of themselves bless any man, he was that man of all others in the whole empire. He had gathered his friends and his wife about him in his own house, and told them of all his glory, his wealth, his many children, his promotion above all the princes and servants of the king, and of his last honor as the sole guest at the royal banquet; an honor to be repeated on the morrow at the queen's own request. What house in all Persia should be so happy as this royal favorite's? But Haman was not happy, and he knew that he was not, and was not ashamed to say why. There was a spectre in his house, and it haunted him day and night. He had just seen it in the street, and it followed him home, and sat at his table, and gazed at him in his dreams. It was the spectre of the one man who, of all the suppliant throng, was obstinate or independent enough not to bow to the royal favorite; so that Haman, the haughty Haman, said in the bitterness of his

heart, in that confidential circle of friends: "All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." The wife, ready, as wives are apt to be, to espouse her husband's quarrels, and backed up by the whole company of subservient friends, prescribed a most summary remedy for the trouble of her lord: "Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king, that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then go thou merrily with the king into the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made."

Fearful counsel, and in the end as bad for Haman as he intended that it should be for Mordecai! Before, however, yielding to our natural indignation at the intended outrage, let us try to study a little into the philosophy of its motive, as a chapter in our common human experience. Study it wisely, and we shall be inclined to say that the spectre that haunted Haman to the verge of destruction, is one of a family that in one form or another is apt to haunt all hearts and homes, not duly guarded against them. Our thought in this essay turns upon this morbid visitation and its remedy, or the Spectre and the Exorcism. Is it not very evident, that our happiness does not depend so much upon the absolute amount of our privileges, as upon the comparative view that we take of them; and that all the blessings of a man's lot vanish at once the moment he gives way to invidious comparisons, and allows his mind to rest upon the one fatal point in

which his wish is baffled by his inability, or his pre-eminence disputed by a single adversary? The case just quoted is a very strong one; yet the principle concerned is renewed every day, and carries repining and sin in its train. Haman, the first subject in the realm, was stung to the quick that one head held itself so erect among the sycophants at the king's gate, and his mortification settled into a deadly hatred, that began by intriguing for the destruction of the offender's whole race, and, impatient of delay, hastened to build a high gallows for Mordecai himself. What man has not found in his own nature some elements of feeling, such as rankled in that man's heart? Who does not see that if he should indulge and exaggerate his own morbid jealousies and suspicions, he might conjure up a spectre as dismal as that which haunted Haman's splendid dwelling? Often the offence begins in precisely the same form, and the ready imagination evokes a legion of moody misgivings, because some man in the street or gateway has failed to bow in the usual courtesy, or perhaps an unconscious neglect has been construed into a deliberate slight. "I met that man and he did not speak to me!" how often some sensitive person says, with a tone, which, if not checked, may construe a casual oversight into a ground of lasting enmity. But the evil is of very wide compass, and in some form enters into most of the discomforts of social life. All men, however successful they may be, are destined to be disappointed in one or more respects; and the one dark spot in the horizon, is apt to call attention away from all the bright-

ness around it, and to haunt the eye like a spectre. The trouble deepens the moment that disappointment stands identified with a neighbor's success; thus his good is looked upon as our evil. How much of this spirit pervades the social world; and people think and act as if their prosperity were blasted, because some rival outstrips them in the race of competition. Even little children catch the virus, and come home from school with Haman's scowl upon faces that should be bright with young smiles, as if saying, in view of all that is done for them in the house: "all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see another person more favored than I am, or disinclined to show me honor." Consider the heart-burnings of society, so far as they show themselves, and have we not reason to infer from the spectres that come thus to light, the existence of myriads more, in the same dark livery, that hide themselves in their secret places? The tendency is to bring to the heart and the home some ruling dislike or hatred, to cast its baleful shadow over the whole life.

The philosophy of this frequent fact it is not very difficult to state in general terms, for the spectre wins and keeps his power by deranging the true order of existence, alike in regard to the outward relations of things and the working of interior motives, and so by setting up a rule essentially infernal instead of the order of God's kingdom. Consider this double derangement alike as *perverting* the field of action and *inverting* the active powers. A man looks upon things before him properly

and religiously, when he surveys them in their bearing upon his happiness and usefulness; recognizing gratefully whatever can give him joy, and considering seriously whatever is most important for him to do. Following this order of vision, he sees most vividly the good most to be enjoyed, and the work most needing to be done. How fearfully Haman's spectre perverts this order of vision, and fixes the eye, with intense gaze, on the things that are most repulsive to the feelings, and most likely to throw the will off the track of duty, by following the blaze of a false fire instead of the steady ray of the true light. Who does not see the difference and understand what this perversion means? Think of your blessings, ingrate; think of what you are to do to requite the favor of your generous King; but no, demented man, you see nothing but that one slight, and instead of thinking of your loyal duty, you are plotting a persecution likely to end in civil war, and are building a gallows for your own haughty neck. Not alone—not alone is the victim. Happy is the man who escapes every taint of that experience of the *perverted* vision.

If we would find the root of the matter, we must go still farther, and look into the springs of action. There, in the inner sphere, we shall find an *inversion* corresponding with that outside *perversion*. The true order within the sphere of motives is, that a man in a sense of God's indwelling and overruling love, should carry out a spirit of good will, alike filial and fraternal, in all his plans and deeds. This is as much the true order in the soul as it is

the true order in the body for the sweet red blood to flow to the extremities in its healthful tide from its mysterious fountain, and to return again to be renewed and incarnadined there, by the breath of heaven sweeping through these vital air-chambers. The perverse order of the motives is seen, when a man sets himself up in the place of God, and demands that all men and things shall serve his selfishness; insisting upon entire indulgence as his right, and resenting every disappointment and humiliation as an outrage upon his dignity. This is as if the course of the blood were to be changed, and a black current should go forth through the arteries to the extremities, and the poor patient, under this fearful derangement, should expect a ruddy and healthful current to return from the exhausted extremities. Nay, does not God himself, by his own natural symbol—that hieroglyph older than the inscriptions of Memphis—illustrate the inversion of the motives in this very way, by ordaining that hatred should at once show its true colors, by bringing its own blackness to the face, and changing the very course of the blood? But without pushing analogies too far, or dealing in any perplexing abstractions, consider the perversion of motives in its practical results. There is a man who has so inverted the working of his affections, that his whole life is one continued pulse of selfish action. He wants a great many things, and if he is baffled in any one desire, he complains of the one disappointment, and vents his spleen upon all who are directly or indirectly parties to the issue. By the very play of his motives, he must needs see the

spectre wherever he goes. There will always be something to frustrate his plans; somebody in the way of his desires; and he will find himself dogged constantly by a spectre of hatred and complaint; a creature who interprets all actual goods as cause of repining, so long as a single desire is not gratified; and all friendly services as so much ground of rage, so long as any man's demanded service is withheld.

Is this so; and can any man consent to torment himself so foolishly, in his very passion to have every thing his own way? Ah! there is nothing so foolish as selfishness, and nothing so impoverishing as covetousness! The poor victim may curse the spectre that haunts him, and none the less be the victim still. Do we talk of the fascination of desire, there is an equal fascination in aversion. Love and death, says a gifted woman, are the two tragedies of life. If there be a fascination in the passion that makes one being's presence essential to another's peace, there is a worse fascination that makes one being's very existence the curse of another's life. Haman, in his very hatred of Mordecai, committed his own peace to the proud Jew's keeping; and fastened to his heart more strongly the fact of that erect and, perhaps, disdainful head, than his love for his wife Zeresh possessed him, with her smile. Who does not know something of this fascinating power of complaint and hatred, in fixing the mind with an iron grasp to the very thing dreaded or loathed? When we look down upon some dark rolling water, there is a kind of mysterious attractiveness in the

very fear which it excites, so that one of the masters of human nature, Goethe, has embodied the fact in one of his most exquisite ballads, "The Fisherman:"

"The water rolled, the water swelled;
It wetted his bare feet;
A something through his bosom thrilled;
He seemed his love to meet.
She spake to him, she sang to him;
With him, 'twas quickly o'er:
Half drew she him, half sank he in,
And never was seen more."

In actual life, too, many a timid creature has, by foreboding some sickness or calamity, brought on the very ill feared. Happy is the man who has none of this morbid disposition to brood over troubles, actual or fancied. Woe to the man who yields so far to the tendency, as to allow himself to dwell upon some slight or insult, until the author of it haunts him like a spectre, with the dire fascination of a growing hatred. A remarkable instance of this was seen in the history of a young Hessian, of good connections, Francis David Stirn, who was born about the year 1735. He was very well educated; and by his elegant accomplishments, he was enabled, when driven from his country by the invaders, to sustain himself in London by his learning and accomplishments. His jealous temper, embittered by his dependent condition, became virtual insanity. One day, finding a few pieces of bread in his way, he burst into the most furious rage, at what he

insisted upon interpreting into an insulting emblem of his poverty. Not even the gospel, which he professed, and had been educated to preach, could soothe his madness. The spectre haunted him still, and finding his patron the next day in a convivial party, he reached across the table and struck him dead. This is an extreme case, yet it illustrates a common infirmity. Many persons are deserving of censure, some are deserving of the most emphatic condemnation, but no man is worth hating. Hate a man and you hold him to yourself with a power far mightier than common friendship wields.

> "The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
> Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

But what hooks of steel has friendship to compare with the grapnel-irons which we fasten to an enemy the moment we give him our hatred and begin to plot against him? All men receive slights, most men receive injuries, but no true man will embitter his own soul and magnify an enemy, by making him the object of a deliberate, brooding hatred. Invariably, in proportion as a man tries to hurt an enemy, the enemy gains power over his peace; and he who builds Haman's gallows, is doomed in some way to share Haman's suspense.

Such is the spectre, so ready to rise up from the disappointments and enmities of our lot, to haunt the heart and the home. Is there any help for it, or are our feel-

ings and fancies as much fatalities, as our country or our complexion? Help for it? yes, both specific and general; since all that a man does to bring his mind and conduct to the true order, tends to rebuke and prevent the perversion and inversion of which we have been speaking. How remarkable the example and spirit of Jesus Christ are in this respect! He, the merciful and holy, was constantly beset by cruel and sinful men; yet sensitive as he was to human sympathy, he never allowed himself to brood over his wrongs and the authors of them. On the mountains, when assailed by the whole host of dark visitations to tempt his desires; in the garden, beset by the same powers, striving to move his fears; on the cross, meeting all desires and all fears arrayed in every form of worldliness and sin, he did not so far yield to their power as to allow that utter wickedness to fasten his mind to its revolting image, even with the grasp of antipathy. Above it he looked; above the sin, above the sorrow, to God's infinite love, and to the mansions of peace ineffable; and the Lamb of Heaven died with his heart full of blessed visions, as he said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Here is the great secret of overcoming evil, whatever be the form, real or imaginary, in which it haunts us. Drive out the spectre by the expulsive power of a better guest—the force of a soothing and blessed affection. Begin and continue in this course, until it shall form the master purpose, and mould all the uses of life. More than we can well define, the divine power will work with us to break every evil spell, and to

fix every worthy truth and affection. A life from the hidden spheres of joy and light, will flow in to cheer and brighten our dark and troubled being. The great atonement which our Saviour achieved, in his own person, by the communion of his pure humanity with the Spirit of the Father, will shed its blessing upon us, and throw around us its own gentle constraining, to lift us into reconciliation with the Father. As the true fellowship spreads, the good work on earth will go on; and benign powers within the veil will conspire, with true efforts among men, to establish the reign of heaven in the world, and to drive all foul spectres of darkness and hatred to the caverns of their primeval night.

Does this doctrine look any of us in the face, with its rebuke and its appeal? Nay, who is not addressed by it? Say each of us to our own souls, wherein it is that we hurt our peace or waste our time and forces under the spell of morbid fear or complaining or antipathy? What heart, what home is not sometimes haunted, as Haman's was, by a spectre that casts all blessings into the shade, and shuts out or distorts the very light of heaven itself? Who of us does not allow a foolish worldliness to prescribe for us its own standard, and to think ourselves wretched if, in any point, we fall behind in the race of folly? Who of us does not cherish some personal pique, until it becomes a ghostly terror, and casts its shadow upon us wherever we go? Who of us is free from the complaining spirit that takes from our table its zest, and throws its incubus

upon our sleep? Who of us really lives, or earnestly tries to live, day by day, within the kingdom of the all merciful God, cheered by its light, and trying to throw its brightness upon every labor and trial, as well as every privilege and success? Heaven's blessing will not fail to reward every earnest effort, and within the heart and the home of the true seeker, the Dove of God will bring his peace unspeakable, and the dark spectre cannot abide that presence.

The Angel of the Hearth.

THE ANGEL OF THE HEARTH.

The air has been somewhat chilly of late, and the first fires lighted upon our hearths, have cheered us by their grateful warmth and their genial association. Perhaps there is no season of the year more suggestive, than the first autumnal evening that gathers us around the fireside; and the lights and shadows that play about the room, take the place of the more gorgeous tints that so lately curtained the sunset in the summer sky. It needs no very vivid fancy to see an angel in the house then, and recognize something of God's own Shekinah in the ascending flame, so cheering to body and soul. Nay, it is not at all a fancy, but a most sober truth, that a messenger of God is with us there, for our home blessings come to us directly in the line of his creative and providential goodness; and whatever speaks his love to us, is an angel of his sending. There was much meaning and beauty in the custom of the ancient Christians, which connected devout sentiment with the time of lighting the lamps, and intro-

duced the evening hours with a hymn or prayer. There is something at once tender and solemn in the season, when the lights in the dwelling put away the gathering darkness of the night, and the family circle is drawn together around the cheerful radiance. Never does this feeling, however, steal upon us with more power than at the first chilly autumnal evening, when the fire sends out its welcome heat, and seems to minister with the milder lights in the room, like a stately priest among his assisting acolytes. Then we can devotedly say the hymn:—

"Now the stars are lit in heaven,
We must light our lamps on earth:
Every star, a signal given,
From the God of our new birth:
Every lamp, an answer faint,
Like the prayer of mortal saint.

"Mark the hour, and turn this way,
Sons of Israel, far and near!
Wearied with the world's dim day,
Turn to Him whose eyes are here,
Open, watching day and night,
Beaming unapproachéd light!"

Look now, each of us, to the Angel of the hearth, and hear what God says to us through him of our life, in its interests, affections and hopes. First of all, let us survey our world of experience under the home light, and see how its various scenes and cares appear. Does not a voice, at once tender and solemn, rebuke our worldliness,

and bid us interpret things about us, less in the spirit of carnal pride and polity, and more in the temper of filial gratitude and obligation. Out in the street, the world jostles us at every step, and measures our consequence by the standard of our ostentation or our good fortune, in the scramble for gold or honor. At home, we are to make chief account of the heart; knowing that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he hath. Under the light of the angel of the hearth, the unpretending competence that secures domestic peace or comfort, comes to us all laden with the benediction of heaven. The very fire that sends out its cheer, is fed by wood or coal from forests or mines, that God has been preparing for us these many ages; and the genial blaze is a torch of remembrance, that lights up the whole course of time, along which heaven's blessings have been travelling towards us from the beginning. As we muse on, how the light brightens, and how vast is the procession of events and men who then stand before us, as having had some part in securing us our daily blessings! Whatever act of Providence has made the soil fruitful, and the forest and the quarry abundant, that we might have a house to live in, and plenty to live upon; whatever providential men have been raised up to quicken our social affections, or enlarge our intellectual resources, or exalt our daily life—all rise before us with new brightness, as we track the foot-prints of ages in that radiance. To each heart there will be some peculiar revelation, according as peculiar thought or experience may have colored the individual

life. To each of us, the good angel lights up many kind faces, whether present or absent, or departed; and his flame is not dimmed in its brightness, although it start the hallowed memories of the dead.

There is something more than mere sentiment in this retrospection, for it shows us what Providence has done to give us domestic peace; and points out what we ought to have done, and to do, to make those gifts effectual. Does not this first fire-light throw penetrating glances upon our past career, and show us what we have done or not done, to make the fireside what it ought to be? If we have done an honest man's earnest work, and secured by intelligent industry a sphere of true household comfort, is there not a blessing in that cheerful blaze, as it sheds its glow upon the many difficulties with which we have struggled, and the determined purposes that we have carried out? Does not the voice of the angel of the hearth bid us work still more bravely, and yet wisely, not merely or chiefly to win external comforts, but to secure the higher goods of life, the refining culture, the generous thought, the engaging affections that give the fireside its best wealth and charm? The light of home shines at once on the path of God's bounty to us, and on the way of our duty to each other; and the angel urges at once a grateful remembrance and earnest obligation.

We remark again, that the same good genius throws light upon the interior of life, and bids us look within as well as around us. The house has an interior which

shuts out the noise of the street, and the traffic of the market-place. This interior of wood and stone, is an expressive emblem of a deeper interior within the halls and chambers of the heart itself. We bless the genial blaze that burns upon the hearth, and delight to see the faces of kindred and friends lighted up by its glow. What kind of fire is burning within us? Is it one that cheers us, and would cheer others, could they see it? This is a searching question, solemnly asked by the angel of the hearth. Is there an altar within the soul, upon which the votive flame keeps continually burning, blessing us ever with the light and love of God in its rays? If not, then is our hearth cheerless indeed; and, although our house be a palace, provided with all the appliances of outward comfort, it lacks the finest grace to its possessor. Although in mid-winter the fruits and flowers of the tropics may send their fragrance to him from his conservatory, he freezes in the Arctic atmosphere of his own selfishness, and famishes in the penury of his own spiritual emptiness. Let the true light burn within, and the plainest home is better than a palace, and its owner entertains angels unawares.

We should not disparage any hospitable wish to welcome strangers to a plentiful table; and he is a churlish man who does not remember gratefully the good cheer which has been graced by the presence of friendly faces. But the finest hospitality is within the heart itself, and without this, the daintiest luxury is famine; and with it, the frugal table, nay, a cup of cold water, is a feast. We

need to appreciate more than we do the charm and power of kindly affections, generous ideas, and genial manners in making the fireside attractive, and lighting up the home-interior with a brightness streaming from an inner sanctuary, a holy of holies, into which no carnal foot can penetrate. The best of social delight comes from this source; and nothing on earth leaves so deep an impression, as those hours that have been passed in sensible, unaffected sociality; when a cheerful faith has pervaded the domestic circle, until the very flame on the hearth has seemed to glow with a light not of this earth. We should make more account of this in our modes of education, and our plans of living. We should not make the vulgar mistake of confounding expense and show with sociality; foolishly thinking that we can give no hospitality, unless our houses are illuminated and crowded like a theatre, and a huge table is spread with a profusion far more prolific with nightmare and dyspepsia than with genial conversation, balmy sleep, and a healthful to-morrow. Whatever people may say to the contrary, there is no place where good sense may be more fully carried out in social life than in the great city. Here we may be as independent as we choose, and have our own friends and ways without any petty dictator. We may be as foolish or as judicious as we wish. We may join the tribe of Gad, which, since the time of Moses, seems to have outgrown the larger tribe of Judah; or we may go with a quiet and sensible circle of friends, who keep such ways and such hours as do not outrage the laws of God and nature.

What is there, reader, in the world more needed to cheer our homes, than the light of a true interior life, sensible, genial, and in its playfulness or its sobriety, equally refreshing and attractive? Look within thyself, says the angel of the hearth, for the fire that can enliven the soul, and cheer kindred and friends with its hospitable ray.

And how can we obey the good genius in this request, without going one step further? How can we help hearing his call to us, to look above as well as around and within? Look above to the source of all true comfort and all true strength. Too prone we are to take merely the human view of the fireside, to the neglect of the divine view; so that not seldom the household seems the very shrine of poor egotism or clannish isolation. In prosperous days, this godless view sadly belittles affluence; and in days of adversity, it shuts out the best springs of peace and power.

Believe that in the family the first altar-fire was kindled, and that its flame should be brightened, not dimmed by the light of the public sanctuary. Who so dull as not to perceive a divine idea, coeternal with the divine Word itself, stamped upon the constitution of the household; and becoming clearer and clearer as its meaning is carried out? "Idea," however, is a cold term for that sense of a divine authority, nay, a heavenly presence, that an earnest mind feels, when communing with the good angel of the hearth. Nay, is not God himself our host, when we are what we ought to be at home; and not merely in

solemn meditations and direct prayers, but in all kindly affections, and reverent thought, and filial duty, is he not with us through his enlightening and comforting Spirit. In fact, dim and unspiritual as our poor vision may be, do we not discern that the very finest grace of a household lies in its recipiency of heavenly influence, in its being the shrine of the light and love that are uncreated and eternal? The most characteristic thing about each of us, as individuals, is decided not so much by the influence that we give as by that which we receive. We are pretty well known by the company that we most gladly receive. What can decide better the character of a household, than the moral and spiritual influences that it welcomes? what more mark its dignity and joy, than the fact of its dependence upon God's blessing and the consecration of its affections and cares by his indwelling Spirit? Every creature of heaven grows by recipiency, whether a tree or a soul. The home grows heavenward by receiving the living water, the blessed bread through every channel of spiritual nurture, and is light and genial the more of heaven opens within its walls.

There is great power in this idea; power far beyond any romantic sentiment. What thought can be more strengthening, than the conviction that within the house, whose dwellers try to lead the true life, a divine principle is at work, building up the spiritual home out of materials, not made with hands, but akin to those that form the heavens? In the eye of the civil law every man's house is a castle, which cannot be broken into by any

violent hand with impunity. Yet without some better defence, some walls of more ethereal fabric, the dwelling may be open to a host of rude intrusions; and even through closed doors whole hordes of wasteful passions, vanities, and lusts may come trooping in. We need something more than our will or caprice to keep them out, and to keep the heavenly visitants within. We need such castle walls as God's own Spirit builds wherever it is cherished, even that divine sphere which his love invariably forms wherever it dwells, pervading all things with its own blessed atmosphere, and putting every noxious thing to flight. What man who knows any thing of true home-life, cannot tell what this means, and will not ascribe to such a source, that genial and sacred sphere of influence that encircles his friends, makes wisdom and goodness beautiful to him, and repels, as by some latent antipathy, the besetting sin that is too apt to conspire with the outer world against his peace? Look above, at the good angel's bidding, and we may see the city of God descending, as in the prophet's vision, encircling with its walls our lowly dwelling, and repeating to us the comforting words: "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Grieve not then the good angel who calls us from the hearth thus, to look aronnd and within and above. Let no rapacious vanity, no unhallowed lust, no reckless am-

bition, no base covetousness, no corroding petulance, no foul suspicion, no blasting unbelief destroy our home allegiance, ravage our heart or our hearth, and make our good genius veil his face in sorrow, or vanish in despair. Rather let him have more and more of our loyalty, as we learn to enrich and deepen our sources of domestic peace, and consecrate all the best gifts of mind and heart before his votive fire. However true and steadfast we may be, we may not hope to shut all changes out; and ere many years the happiest household is a place of mourning. But it is precisely then, when vicissitudes come, that the good genius is doubly precious to our souls. Without reversing his torch or trailing it in funereal gloom, he still lifts it cheerfully aloft; and the hope that is undying, shines out with the light of other days from its brightness. Angel of memory, he is angel of hope; and he never allows a true heart to forget the heavenly mansions whence he came, and where hope and memory meet together in the life eternal.

It is one of the profound and attractive fancies of Swedenborg, that when an infant dies, the benign God, who always tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and is ready to provide a balm for every sorrow, places the little pilgrim into eternity, under the care of a guardian angel, who has the absent mother's look, so that the child is nurtured in the heavenly life under the auspices of the same love that gave the first smile upon its earthly experience. Who is there that looks forward to the eternal shores, that untried country, without something of that same yearning

for some familiar face, which the mystical philosopher ascribes to that infant heart? What man is so strong or so self-relying, that he is not sick at heart when absent from all that is most dear and familiar to him in the world? The Swiss soldier, brave to a proverb, and grasping his sword closer, as danger thickens, is unmanned at once, if, in his distant campaign, he hears the song that tells him of the echoes of his mountain home. The Greek, who has played from childhood among the waves of the Ægean, and sailed fearlessly on its waters in his manhood, if ushered into Arcadia, or even asked to look upon the beauty of Tempe itself, asks still for his own element, the sea, "My own sea, where is that?"—

"Oh, rich your myrtle's breath may rise!
Soft, soft your winds may be;
Yet my sick heart within me dies—
Where is my own blue sea?

"I hear the shepherd's mountain flute,
I hear the whispering tree—
The echoes of my soul are mute—
Where is my own blue sea?"

Happy the man, who, as he looks towards the curtain quivering before the unseen world, and parting for him to go through, can be assured of having a friend in the angel of his own hearth, whose smile has the likeness of all the heavenly host, and teaches him that heaven itself is a transfiguration of the brightness of a true home. Not

over the consecrated altar only, but also over the consecrated hearth, broods the Dove of God; and here, as there, the Spirit renews the Master's cheering call:—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions."

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